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THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE URBAN STUDIES CENTER: A BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM OF THE ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL, 1971-1977

A Dissertation Presented

By

KEVIN PATRICK O'MALLEY

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1979

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Approved as to style and content by:

Byrd L. Jones, Chairperson

Barbara J. Love, Member

Clyde Evans, Member

Mario D. Fantini, Dean
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To my beautiful wife, Kathleen,
and to my wonderful children,
Michael Sean and Jennifer Brigid,
for their tolerance and understanding;
their encouragement and loyalty
throughout my program of study.

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ABSTRACT

The Growth and Development of the Urban Studies Center: a Boston Public School Alternative Program of the English High School, 1971-1977

(February, 1979)

Kevin P. O'Malley, B.A., State College at Boston
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Directed by: Professor Byrd L. Jones

The Urban Studies Center is a separate site, urban public school alternative program. It was founded in 1970 to develop a curriculum option for urban students by extending the walls of the classroom to include the rich resources found in the city, and by providing a more human unit approach to education through the introducation of a small, but clearly defined, program of study. The founding principles that the city can be utilized as a classroom and that racial and socio-economic isolation can be reduced in a school program have served as guideposts for the Center throughout its history.

Three major objectives were identified as central to this undertaking. Firstly, the study documents that an urban alternative program can survive and succeed over an extended period of time. Secondly, it presents

the history of the program while simultaneously reviewing the program collaborative activities, their nature, character and experiences. Thirdly, the study examines inferences relative to the program's development and draws some conclusions from the lessons of the Urban Studies experience.

The program was conceptualized in a failing school in a failing school system by several faculty members who refused to bow to the insidious policies of an inherently racist school committee which doomed children from low-income and minority backgrounds to a meaningless future in a society which recognizes academic achievement as a measure for success. The program, called "The City, has survived numerous changes over the years, among these several site relocations, and has remained relevant to its students.

Today, the program is a result of various collaborations which have added to the basic curriculum. A main thrust of the curriculum has been that the city can be utilized as a classroom. This concept has not only made the program more interesting, but has facilitated the incorporation of several major concerns such as pluralism, developing an informed citizenry and recognizing learning as a life-long experience.

Key to the program's growth and development have been the on-going evaluations which have provided the foundation for planning the Center's future direction. Examined from a number of different perspectives (student, staff, external and internal evaluators), the program has been able to utilize this plethora of information to meet the continuing needs of a diverse student body.

Several major conclusions have been drawn from this study. Among these is that the integration of cognitive and affective curricula can be developed in an urban alternative; visual literacy is a fundamental educational building block; size is important to the effectiveness of a sound learning environment; and finally, urban systems can be changed from within. Most importantly, however, the study demonstrates that the Urban Studies Center is a testament to the fact that urban schools can work; and that children from low-income and minority backgrounds can and will learn in an environment that is not only conducive to the academic process, but one that challenges their abilities and stimulates their potential.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Alternative programs in urban school systems are at a crossroads. Schooling as a key to the social reform of poverty and racism has been attacked by enemies and frustrated by supporters. 'Back to basics' has become a recurring theme in many critics' attacks on the schools in general and on what they consider frills in particular. Increased options have lost appeal for some people when they consider curricula or students' places in that curricula. A shift in direction and loss of charisma have been responsible for many well known programs losing community support and media acclaim.

Yet, as an educational movement, alternative education is still strongly supported by some teachers and continues to offer options that provide quality education for every individual in our society. As Fantini has noted:

> Successfully planned and implemented, alternatives by choice can advance significantly the noblest themes of contemporary education, including such perennial favorites as individualization and humanization of the formal learning process.

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[1]Mario D. Fantini, "Education by Choice," NASP Bulletin, September 1973, p. 19.

That statement informs the spirit of both the Urban Studies Center itself and the case study that will be presented about that program's history.

Founded at the English High School in 1971, the Urban Studies Center has stressed two major themes. First, schools should make better use of the city as a classroom and second, there should be more successful ways to increase meaningful student participation in the process of their own education. Dissatisfied with the educational programs at English High School, the planners of the program believed that a small group setting and possibly a separate site location could make a difference despite the many risks involved in the initiation of such a program.

Many of the ideas and part of the impetus for starting this program came from similar experiments in other parts of the country. Before initiating the program at English High School several of these studies were investigated. The first and most acclaimed urban alternative program, the Parkway Program, utilized the city as a classroom. John Bremer, Parkway's first director, described the program as "an activity, planned and carried out by a group with the purpose of improving the learning of the members of that group." This seemingly simple

concept led to a new way of educating some young people in Philadelphia. School became "an activity not a location" where students learned in the reality of the city by actually experiencing the education they were receiving. As Bremer explained:

> We learn how to be free by being free, we learn how to chose by choosing, and we learn how to be responsible by being responsible, that is, by experiencing the consequences, expected and unexpected, good and bad.[2]

Metro, an alternative high school program in Chicago, was founded with the specific goal "to develop and implement a new approach to urban education." Like Parkway, Metro began as "a school without walls whose activities . . . take place where there is learning to be done." Among its many innovations, Metro actively involved students in the daily operation of the program. Metro's founders promised "to provide students a significant role in determining their educational goals and activities." Like Parkway, Metro for a time proved to be popular and influential.[3]

By 1977, however, Parkway and Metro and other alternative programs in urban and suburban settings seemed

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[2]John Bremer and Michael von Moschzisker, The School without Walls (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 19, 25, 32.

[3]Donald Moore, Thomas Wilson, and Richard Johnson, Metro School: Chicago's School without Walls (Chicago: Urban Research Corporation, 1971), pp. 97, 100.

to have lost their popularity and momentum. Some alternatives did not survive the passing of a charismatic leader. The hard tasks of teaching and learning left other programs with "burned out" teachers and administrators. Fortunately, some programs grew and developed over the years, including the Urban Studies Center.

A case study of the program will exemplify the possibilities for long-term relevance to the education of its students for an urban alternative. As Sarason has noted there is a need for studies of successful programs, especially those dealing with urban youth. Not all urban schools and programs have failed. Several have demonstrated success and, as he suggests, case studies of these programs can be a useful addition to the literature of urban education.

There are certain clear advantages for undertaking a case study of the Urban Studies Center from the vantage point of the founder and administrator. Such a study can not only treat "prehistory as being important," but also reveal the developmental processes at work. Problems and experiences may be viewed not only in their theoretical aspects but also may be seen in the context of the times in which they occurred. The case study method can present practical experiences from which relevant observations may be drawn. In addition, interviewing students and gaining access to program papers relevant to the study

will be facilitated.[4]

Such a personal view of the Urban Studies Center, however, is not without limitations. Sarason warns that "in our accustomed way of thinking and acting, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to look at and describe settings independent of the personalities of people." Such subjectivity could limit the value of the study. He also cautions that "our strong interests have the defects of their virtues in that they narrow our focus, blind us to the obvious and rob us of our capacity to recognize that the emperor may be quite naked." Being too close to the subject may cause the observer to consider change only in terms of the "engineer aspects" or surface values instead of changing what may be strongly held theories or beliefs.[5]

According to Woods, case studies "take account of all pertinent aspects of one thing or situation" noting that one of the strongest points of this method is the immediacy of the study, the "first hand contact with field situations."[6] Asher, nevertheless, notes that "the observers in case studies must be cautious in letting personal

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[4]Seymour B. Sarason, Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), pp. 2-24.

[5]Ibid., pps. 227-236, 222, 88, 109.

[6]Carter V. Woods and and Donald E. Scates, Methods of Research (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954), p. 726.

biases and judgements influence their observations" and warns against the dangers of generalizations as "it is difficult to generalize from just a few subjects."[7]

Despite these difficulties the case study approach is rewarding. As Fox notes:

> . . . the case study is not an approach for a beginner but rather for an advanced student, who knows enough to be dissatisfied with the generalizations available in the field and with the discussion of human characteristics removed from their functioning in the human individual.[8]

Too often the attempt to generalize broadly removes the juice of life from the story, treats students and faculty as numbers rather than as individuals, with hopes, fears, and various capacities, and ignores educational change as a person-oriented process.

A case study of the Urban Studies Center will describe a successful program in an urban setting. It will contribute to an all too limited body of literature in this area. A recent ERIC search revealed only a single similar case study.[9] Although it is not advised that others attempt to replicate the Urban Studies Center whose history is embedded in that of Boston and the persons involved, its success may inspire others to seek

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[7]J. William Asher, Educational Research and Evaluation Methods (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976), p. 149

[8]David J. Fox, The Research Process in Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 428.

[9]ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1977.

creative solutions to parallel problems facing urban high schools in other city districts.

A Program Begins

A School

English High School is the oldest public high school in the United States,"founded in 1821, the year preceding that in which the old town of Boston, then a place of fifty thousand inhabitants, became a city." With the exception of Boston Latin School, education in those days ended after grammar school. As Boston grew in population and wealth, the town fathers felt that traditional education was:

> not sufficiently extensive, nor otherwise calculated to bring powers of the mind into operation, nor to qualify a youth to fill usefully and respectably many of those stations both public and private in which he may be placed.[10]

English High School was founded as a new school to meet the emerging demands of a growing metropolis. Significantly the city fathers did not choose to enlarge or replicate the prestigous classical Latin School. English was founded as an alternative; a people's school; a school relevant to the daily lives and commerce of the city and its people.

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[10]George A. Moore, A Short History of the English High School (Boston: By the author, 1941), p. 125.

For over 150 years English High School served many of its students well. The list of illustrious graduates is long. Thousands of men and now women have become, in the words of the school's motto: "persons of honor and achievement." Over the many years a tradition of excellence for serving all of the citizens of Boston was established, bringing prestige and fortune to the school. Within such a framework the year 1970 was especially bitter for the school. For in 1970, old, betrayed and dispirited, English High School was perilously close to extinction.

English High School, 1970

Ironically its illustrious past may well have contributed to English High School's problems in 1970. Both the administration and teachers recalled the historic past, while modern educational patterns changed. An atmosphere of apathy pervaded the school in 1970 as tradition turned into intransigence.

By 1970 little innovative planning or programming had taken place in many years. English had operated as an elitist exam school until 1954. Little changed in the curriculum or in the faculty attitudes of the school afterward. New students from all sections of the city added a new element of pluralism to what had always been a diverse student body. In the 1960's change was evident in all aspects of American life. English High School did

not keep up with the times.

The program of studies at the school had not changed dramatically since the 1920's. The curriculum was classical to a fault, excluding the pluralistic, modern aspect of the city from which the students came. Vocational education was scarce and consisted of an ill-equipped business course. The emphasis of the school was on the college-bound youth. Others not so inclined were poorly served. A 1967 evaluation of the school, done by a visiting committee of the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, concluded that the program of studies

> viewed in the broader context of the stated objectives of the school, to guide student growth in achieving their own best development, and in reaching their maximum potential for a useful life in democracy, the program of studies is not entirely adequate.

The physical plant of the old school was appalling and contributed to the failure of the school. The main building on Avenue Louis Pasteur was clearly too old, too small and far too poorly equipped to function as a modern high school. Two annexes in distant Brighton and Roxbury were almost impossible to integrate into a unified high school situation. The evaluation committee found that "the fragmentation of the buildings places tremendous strain on administrative efficiency," and caused "many inconveniences and inadequacies." The committee called for a new physical plant for English High School, in

which all the school students may be housed at once. In a sharply worded statement, the committee charged city authorities with "denying the youth of Boston their rightful opportunity to an education" and that "each year of delay commits another class of students to inferior educational opportunities."[11]

The administration of the school, old and seemingly no longer able to provide leadership, could not spark the reform movement so necessary for the school's future. The morale of both staff and students suffered from the lack of leadership of a controversial and misguided headmaster, who would, for the first time in anyone's memory, be involuntarily removed from his office by the central administration.

This administrative mismanagement contributed to the low morale of the veteran staff. The primary topic of conversation in the teachers' room seemed to be "the good old days." Without direction and spirit, the staff proved ineffective in handling the crisis evident at the school and in teaching the new students who began frequenting its halls. An atmosphere of resigned defeat permeated all levels of the school. At best English High School exemplified what Silberman calls "mindlessness, the failure of

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[11]Evaluation of Boston English High School by a Visiting Committee Representing New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, April 2-5, 1967, by E. Harry Boothby, chairman, pp. 21, 10, 11.

people at every level to ask what they are doing or to inquire into the consequences."[12]

The school's reputation plunged. As it lost credibility with the community and college admissions offices, students felt themselves trapped. They were members of a school which was not adequate, and there was little chance to transfer to other schools. Students actively demanded long denied basic rights such as free association and the right to individuality. The morale of the students continued to decline as they lost faith in the ability of the school to help them. In 1970, English offered no hope to its students. A hope which Gentry has called

> an attitude which foresees a better future, despite the existing facts of persistent discrimination and deprivation. And that attitude is indispensable for learning, whether in school or on the job.[13]

School committee policies, deliberate and heinous, contributed significantly to the problems of English High School. A new pattern of feeder schools was adopted in the late 1960's which was blatantly racist. In the year 1967-1968, 18.5% of English's students were black. After the

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[12]Charles B. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970; A Vantage Book, 1971), p. 36.

[13]Atron A. Gentry, "The Hope Factor for Urban Education," in Urban Education: The Hope Factor, ed. Byrd L. Jones (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1972), p. 124.

feeder school patterns were changed, "in 1969-1970 the entering class of English High School was 76% black and 18.5% other minorities." This statistic, from Judge Garrity's desegregation order of June 21, 1974, as well as much other evidence documented in the order, led the judge to the inescapable conclusion that the new district lines had "the purpose for promoting racial segregation."[14]

The deliberate nature of this charge fed a vicious cycle of decline. Less money was spent on the school. Fewer guidance counselors were allocated, and in general, a significant loss of support from the central administration was evidenced. As the system and the staff withdrew their efforts from the school, the school learning climate worsened. Students reacted bitterly with confrontation after confrontation. The media pictured English High School as a school in trouble. This further diminished support from the community and the school system. In 1970, English was without friends or influence, and its future was dubious.

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[14]Morgan V. Hennigan, 379 F. Supp. 410 (D. Mass 1974), pp. 69-75.

The System

Boston had long evidenced a history of intolerance for new ethnic groups. It is ironic that despite this long history of intolerance documented by Lupo in his book, Liberty's Chosen Home, Boston had for many years a reputation for liberalism. As Lupo describes it, that liberalism had "two distinct messages." One of "compassion for the less fortunate, the other of self-righteous bigotry."[15] This dual message was also delivered as well by the Boston school system. Nationally and historically, Boston presented itself as the leading educational system in the world. Locally, to its own citizens, Boston presented itself as an elitist, bigoted and tradition-bound system which failed to serve much of its disparate population.

Schrag has written an insightful book about the way the Boston school system was run, "a world unto itself." He found that the system "operates on the premise of another age and on the faded laurels of a once glorious reputation." He points out, as does Lupo, that Boston has a long history of neglect of its schools. The attitude which he found prevalent in 1966, and which pervaded for

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[15]Alan Lupo, Liberty's Chosen Home (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977), pp. 11, 64.

another decade, caused a

> patronizing atmosphere about all children in the Boston schools. A sense in which they were regarded as incomplete human beings who must be ministered to, who must be manipulated and managed and whose success as students depends on the positive response to that manipulation.

Schrag maintained Boston schools have failed and that it is largely the fault of the leadership of the schools. "The Boston situation demands not merely reform or adjustment," Schrag insisted, "it demands a fundamental revolution in political structure and educational practice." He presents a case for a metropolitan solution to many of the problems of a city system like Boston. Such a solution may have reinvigorated the schools, but the divisions of the metropolitan areas of the 1970's left Boston to its own devices. In 1967, Schrag predicted that the attempt to bring desegregated and quality education to Boston would be "one of the most significant battles in America, perhaps the most significant."[16]

Lupo has also observed that battle of the Boston schools with a long term critical eye. He recorded the outrageous history of obstruction by which the School Committee avoided any attempts to desegregate a deliberately

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[16]Peter Schrag, The Village School Downtown (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 51, 63, 115, 146,125.

segregated school system and noted that "the School Committee avoided anything that approached public responsibility as it made promises that could not be kept and raised false hopes that made a bad situation truly tragic." The Committee totally misjudged the situation their procrastination had produced, as well as having "misread the stubborness of the blacks, the political climate of the era, the forces that were at work."[17]

Judge Garrity would rule in his famous June 21st desegregation order that the Boston School Committee had repeatedly, with full knowledge of their actions, "taken many actions in their official capacities with the purpose and intent to segregate the Boston Public Schools."[18] In 1970 many parents and students at English High School were aware of the Committee's actions but lacked the power to do anything about what was taking place.

A Response

The obstacles to change at English High School were formidable. Notable among them were an intrinsically conservative school system, a school committee tied up in politics and institutional racism, and a high school in decline. There were no established mechanisms for change

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[17] Lupo, Liberty's Chosen Home, p. 149.

[18] Morgan vs. Hennigan, 379 F. Supp. 410 (D. Mass 1974), p. 145.

and no established receptivity to new ideas by administrators or by teachers. Yet change was essential for the English High School if it were to survive in the 1970's.

Two teachers, James Buckley and Kevin O'Malley, frustrated by the difficulties of teaching and learning at English High School in 1970, decided to act. Both Buckley, a history teacher, and O'Malley, an English teacher, were products of Boston's parochial school system and the local teachers college, Boston State. They were naive about the Boston Public School system and the difficulties inherent in a large urban school system. However, their concern for the climate of learning and teaching at the school helped them to proceed.

They were also bolstered in their efforts by several programs which were gaining national attention such as Philadelphia's Parkway Program and Chicago's Metro School. Both of these reforms centered around the idea that "the city is the classroom." This became a central feature for the new program which would be proposed for English.

During the late 1960's, a national movement was stirring to reshape the schools. The thrust of this movement was an attempt to bring a new openness and a new freedom to education. Even as traditional a school system as the Boston Public Schools could not ignore this new spirit.

In 1967, the school system hired a Harvard educator, Joseph Cronin, to study the system and to write a report that would be the basis for its reorganization. This study was useful for Buckley and O'Malley in thinking about their proposed program.

The report, Organizing an Urban School System for Diversity, was popularly known as the Cronin Report. Cronin had drawn upon some of the finest minds in the city; civic leaders, community groups, parents, students, teachers and educators from a broad spectrum contributed their expertise. Before going into the specific organizational recommendations, the report argued cogently for a new openness, a new spirit of acceptance of all the city's students. "The Boston School Department must recognize and treat as an asset the city's ferment and diversity."

The report, critical of the very traditionalistic curriculum of the schools, stated "The separation of cultural and practical life have probably been more fastidiously cultivated in Boston than in other American cities," and argued for bringing student interests into the policy making realm. Cronin had found the division between the cities and the schools so severe that the reality of the students everyday life was just about excluded from the curriculum. He advocated a curriculum that recognized the city. "Perhaps the School Department could develop programs

centered around the city itself." Only a few superficial organizational recommendations of the Cronin Report were implemented.[19]

Buckley and O'Malley proposed an alternative to the existing course of studies for freshmen at English High School called "The City." They were joined by another teacher, Christopher Lane. Ironically, it was not difficult to propose and introduce a new program. The central administration was too busy with maintaining a dual system, while the administration of the school was too busy handling the innumerable daily crises at English. Further, any program which proposed to do something--anything--with a group of freshmen, was welcomed by the staff. Indeed, everyone seemed too busy worrying about their own particular crises to worry about what would be happening to students.

Planning for the new program revolved around the theme of the "city as a classroom." English High School, in its literature over the years, had always touted its excellent location in the culturally rich section of the city, called The Fenway. Yet, they seldom used the vast educational resources. The new program would attempt to

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[19]Joseph M. Cronin, Organizing An Urban School System for Diversity (Cambridge: McBer and Company, 1970), pp. 23, 278, 282.

exploit these resouces. From the roof of the present English High School one can see within the space of a few blocks such institutions of higher learning as Harvard Medical School, Northeastern University, Simmons College, Emmanuel College, Wentworth Institute, Boston State College, New England Conservatory of Music, Massachusetts College of Art, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, and the John Leland Powers School; such hospitals as Peter Bent Brigham, Children's Hospital, Beth Israel, The Deaconess, Boston Hospital for Women, Sidney Farber Clinic, Parker Hill and New England Baptist; museums such as the Fine Arts and the Gardner; and the following recreational sites, The Riverway, Fenway Park, and the Huntington YMCA.

A second major determination of the proposal's proponents was that the program be for freshmen. This was a political maneuver which brought the program early support from a school which had little success in dealing with its freshmen population. After many meetings and discussions, a proposal was submitted to the Headmaster in the Spring of 1970.

The motivation for the proposal was stated in its introduction:

> To today's urban child, the world is his city, and it is the city which has the greatest impact upon his life. Everything he experiences and learns is influenced by his city environment.

> We feel that this tremendous influence on the life of the child has not been taken into account nor utilized properly in the education of English High School students.
>
> The world of the student and the world of the school have become increasingly unrelated in recent years and the present curriculum has failed to bridge the gap between the two. It is our belief that improvement, modernization and proper utilization of the present curriculum, and expansion of curriculum offerings, are some of the necessary steps towards bridging this gap.[20]

The new program called "The City Program" was designed to take a group of sixty freshmen for three periods a day, in the morning. Three teachers would be involved in the program, using team teaching and an inter-disciplinary approach to the curriculum. A curriculum package, the High School Geography Project: Geography in an Urban Age, was the curriculum core of the program. Students participated in the regular offerings of the school after their morning in "The City."

While the ambition of the staff was great, the initial goals of the program were modest. Among the goals listed in the initial proposal were:

> To aid the students to learn, to identify, to formulate and to discover conclusions and relationships for themselves.

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[20]James Buckley and Kevin O'Malley, "A Proposal for a Program called 'The City' for the academic year 1971-1972," p. 1.

> To develop the need for cooperation and positive participation on the part of the students.
>
> Better preparation for living in the city, where it is anticipated the vast majority of students will live.
>
> By using the city as a laboratory, we hope to better prepare the student to be an effective citizen of the future, by better utilization of the resources of the city.[21]

The program was a great success with the students and a moderate success with the administration and staff. An attendance count taken from the final report cards of freshmen that year produced an impressive statistic. There were 13,987 pupil days present and 6,619 pupil days absent for non "City Program" students that year at English. In the "City Program," there were 4,236 pupil days present and 1,199 pupil days absent. Thus, freshmen as a whole were present only 52.7% of the time, while in the "City Program" that figure was 71.7%, a significant difference.[22] These figures above all others established the program and gave it the "system's blessing to continue.

The continuance of the program, however, was not to be at English High School. The program now called the Urban Studies Center moved to a separate site at 45 Myrtle Street on historic Beacon Hill. Despite the move,

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[21] Buckley and O'Malley, "A Proposal," p. 3.

[22] Urban Studies Center program files.

English remained the main site for the program for both administrative support and the recruitment of students. The fate of the Center, however, was so intertwined with that of English that changes which took place at the school (and some were dramatic) impacted upon the program considerably. A brief examination of some of the more important changes taking place during the program's existence is made here.

The Tower Complex

Perhaps no decision in the history of the school was more important to English High School than the decision on the occupancy of the Tower facility which the school would ultimately occupy. The story of the fight to win occupancy of that building is long and bitter. However, in retrospect, it may well have been the best thing to happen to English. The fight for the new building coalesced a spiritless school and community into a spirited, well-organized, fighting unity which benefited the school in a number of ways. The spirit and pride which was evident at this fight has stayed with the school and was a turning point from the failures so evident in 1970.

In 1949 $10,000,000 was set aside for a badly needed new building for English High School. Delays became endemic, so that it was not until July of 1970, that

ground was broken for the complex, which would be highlighted by a ten story tower building. It was planned, and specifically financed by the state for English High School, but, at the commencement of construction, rumors were rampant about the possibility of new occupants for the tower.

Astonishingly, a movement had gained strength to give the new complex to an elitist exam school, Girls' Latin. Even more astounding was the fact that the move was championed by the Boston School Committee, the majority of whose members were graduates of English High School. The Boston School Committee did indeed decide to give the building to Girls' Latin, a decision which can only be explained by the fact that the politically-oriented school committee was racist as well. So outrageous was this attempt to deny the new school to English High School that Judge Garrity would use part of his June 21st order to document the controversy. He was to conclude that the motive for giving the building to Girls' Latin was indeed a motive steeped in racism. He stated that "there is evidence that the defendants intended to keep English's student body heavily black, and so we find." He went on to state that "the ancient building which had been occupied by English High School was razed, and the

defendants made no plans for housing English."[23] There was no doubt in his mind as to what had transpired.

Judge Garrity appeared ready to act on the issue when another judge, responding to a suit filed by the English High School community intervened in the case. On July 16, 1973, Justice Kaplan of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ordered that "the English High School be housed in the new tower facility upon its opening."[24] The battle was over, but the salutary effects to the entire English High School community of joining together in working for the betterment of the school and fighting for the new facility, remain to this day.

Desegregation Comes to Boston

On June 21, 1974, Judge Garrity ruled that

> the defendants have knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all of the city's students, teachers, and school facilities and have intentionally brought about and maintained a dual school system.[24]

There had been no question about it, despite the protestations of the school committee. Abrams, in his article

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[23]Garrity, June 21st Order, p. 40.

[24]Bradshaw et al v. Tierney et al, pp, 73-91, Suffolk Sup. Ct. (1973).

in the Harvard Educational Review was to state, "There was no question that the Boston schools were segregated, and in fact, the issue was virtually uncontested during the trial."[25] English High School's situation was a prominent part of the judge's decision. Judge Garrity commented at length about the deliberately racist feeder patterns forced on English High School in the late 1960's, as well as the fight for the tower building. The result of this order was the implementation of a weak State Board of Education plan, popularly called "Phase I."

Under Phase I, English High School became, for the first time in its long history, a district high school, with a special theme (see figures 1 and 2). The plan stated that "The teaching/learning philosophy in course offerings at the English High School will be congruent with the academic theme of Art and Human Development."[26] The district stretched from West Roxbury through Jamaica Plain, to Roxbury. The plan was bitterly protested by various elements of the English High School community which resented the lack of the traditional city-wide

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[25]Roger Abrams, "Not One Judge's Opinion: Morgan v. Hennigan and the Boston Schools," Harvard Educational Review 45 (February 1975), p. 6.

[26]"Revised Short Term Plan to Reduce Racial Imbalance in the Boston Public Schools," Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Boston: Parish Priests of Boston, April 25, 1973), p. 111.

FIGURE 1

ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT--NORTH

This district reflects current feeder patterns to a considerable extent, in that this year 321 students from Roxbury and 73 from Jamaica Plain attend English High School, and 165 students from Jamaica Plain, 227 from Roslindale and 316 from West Roxbury attend Boston Latin School, across the street from English High School. These students are able to use public transportation and assigned transportation to attend school.

FIGURE 2

ENGLISH HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT--SOUTH

status of the school. However, the first year of desegregation under Phase I generally went well.

Phase II which took effect the following year was a far more sound plan and attempted to upgrade the schools while simultaneously desegregating them. Under this phase English became a part of a magnet school system with a city-wide student base (see figure 3). English entered into collaborations with the John Hancock Insurance Company, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts College of Art, and Brandeis University. The overall effect of Phase II was quite beneficial and English responded with new programs and an emerging reputation for excellence.[27]

Women at English High School

In September 1972, the first women students were admitted to the student body of English High School. To many members of the staff and administration this was a period of great trauma. Indeed, the trauma of the new female students, and what to do with them, was in the minds of some staff, more of a problem than the riots of the early seventies. Little planning had been done to

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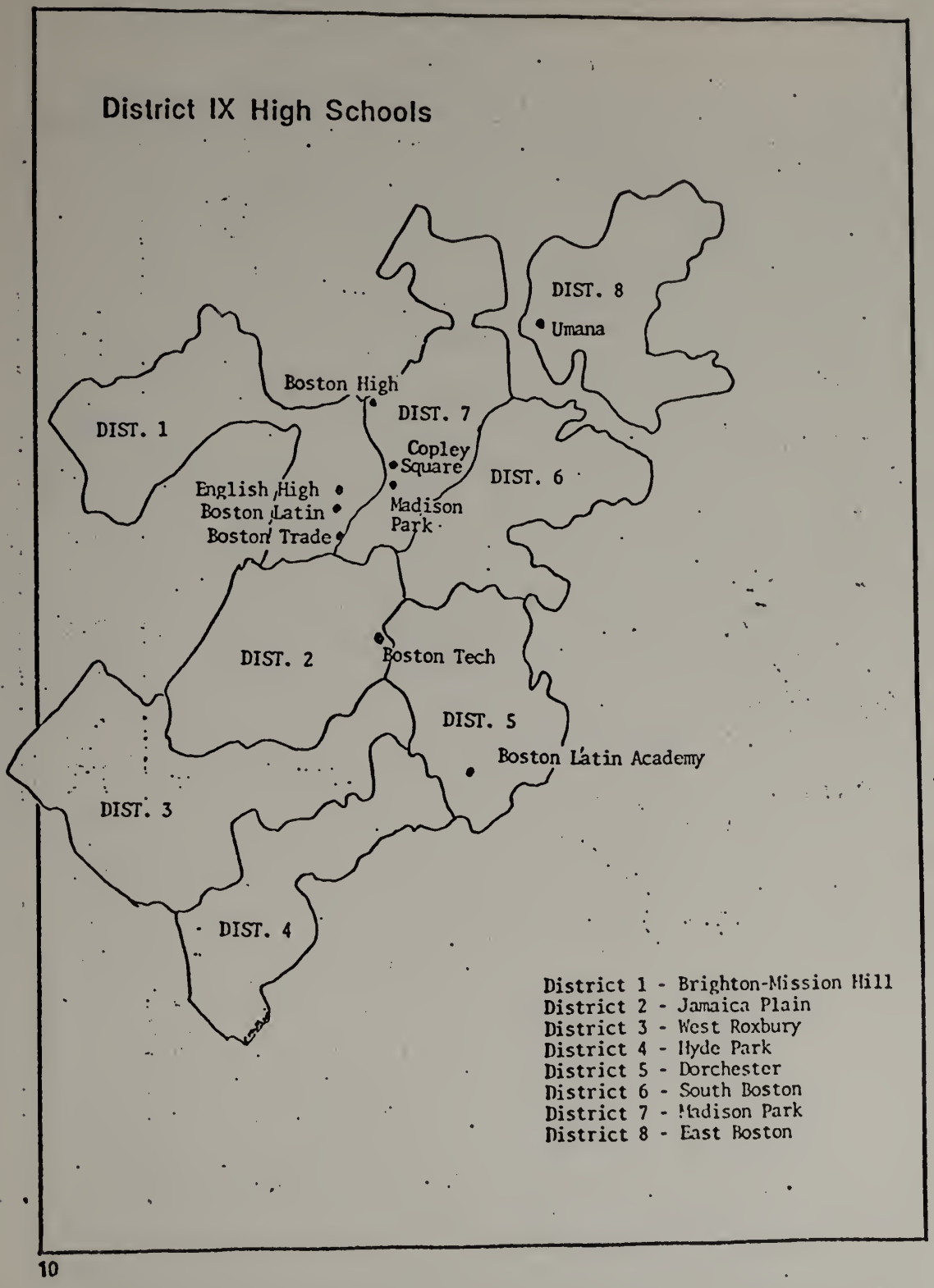
[27] Student Desegregation Plan submitted by the School Committee of the City of Boston (January 27, 1975).

FIGURE 3

CITYWIDE MAGNET DISTRICT



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accommodate this influx of new students so that their impact was especially disturbing to a school that was still a bastion for traditionalism. However, when the first women was graduated from the school in June 1974, their acceptance was complete.

The School Grows

In the years since 1970, English High School has grown from a school of 800 students to one of well over 2200 with a staff of almost 150 teachers. The growth which the new facility has permitted has been more than matched by growth in morale, spirit and energy on the part of all segments of the school community. Students clamor for admissions in such numbers that now many are turned away while teachers from all parts of the city request transfers into the building. Clearly, through substantial improvement in every aspect of the school, English has regained a position of excellence. It has begun once again to attract national attention.

During all these changes and improvements the Urban Studies Center has not only continued as a program but has expanded and developed. More importantly, however, it has demonstrated its relevance by continuing to serve the needs of students and has established itself as an on-going part of English's curriculum.

C H A P T E R I I

THE PROGRAM DEVELOPS

The shrieks echoed around Beacon Hill as two dozen black and white teenagers chased three black youths through the alleys and streets of Beacon Hill. So loud and realistic was the clamour that the police were called. When they arrived they found the participants in the recent uproar calmly reviewing their efforts on a videotape. The students from Boston and suburban Cohasset had just completed a media project on the days of slavery in Boston and Beacon Hill's underground railroad. The locations were historically accurate; the student parts were carefully researched; and judging from the reaction of bystanders, the action was realistic.

The Urban Studies Center was its "classroom." The exercise was not merely a media event. "Real" education was taking place. Students gained first hand experience with history, pluralistic study projects with English language skills, video tape and working together. The day was a well planned school activity.

Despite the progress of the first year in terms of student acceptance, staff enthusiasm, and administrative acceptance several factors mandated changes in the program. The major change was moving the Center to a separate site. Several factors motivated this decision. Since English was virtually an all black school, the program needed to avail itself to more students and schools to fully realize its goal of fostering a spirit of pluralism. In addition, the program needed more freedom of movement for its students than was possible to obtain within the confines of the main building. A final consideration was the feeling that students would buy into the program if it was in a neutral location.

In January 1973, the Center moved into a vacant third floor of a school department building on Beacon Hill. It was the first of many adaptations which fostered its growth and development. Students from English, Ipswich, and Watertown High Schools came to the Center two days a week to join in a curriculum, which focussing on the affective domain, was actualized by the almost exclusive use of media projects and "city as a classroom" activities.

A major project completed by the students was an in-depth study of the deteriorating Quincy Markets. Student research brought the markets into contact with such prominent figures as Walter Muir Whitehill, then

director of the Boston Atheneum and the Thompsons, architects for a plan to refurbish the markets. After thorough research, the students prepared a large six foot by twelve foot model of the Quincy Markets.

So well was the model received that the program garnered publicity and support from it. It was displayed at an open house attended by superintendents and school committee members of the school systems involved. Representatives from the Institute of Contemporary Art who had participated in the buildingof the model began to raise funds for a full scale collaboration with program participants for the next school year. The success of the student project marked a major turning point in the history of the program.

Many of the basic ingredients of today's more structured program were evident in this early undertaking. The wide student base, use of the city as a classroom, the commitment to work within the system and the need to be a school for its students were all present even if somewhat poorly articulated. The crowded schedule of the present program was developing even then. (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Weekly Overview

U.S.C.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	Team Time	and Homeroom →			
8:30	Individual	Skills Develop →			
9:30	Media Instruction		Trip Prep	Instruction Media	Mini Course
10:30	Break		Field Trip →		
11:00 -- 1:30	Seminar	Course		Course	Town Mtg.
	6 wks Art Science Hist/Eng	↓	↓	Phys Ed	Individual Projects & Teacher Planning

The Program Today--Basic Skills

Three primary curriculum assumptions underline the morning academic program called basic skills. The first is that English, Math and Career Exploration are the key to the day's curriculum. The second is that to obtain a maximum energy level for working on basic skills a concentrated block of time, ninety minutes each day, must be set aside for this work. And third, to succeed the curriculum must meet the individual needs of its students. Basic skills attempts to identify the level of the students' development and work with them from that point. A further element is that basic skills is considered a partnership by the Urban Studies Center. Students help to discover their own needs, develop work, advance their skills, and design a curriculum most suitable to themselves.

Several strategies have been promulgated at the Center for basic skills development. Classes try to build upon the strengths and interests of the staff. While some teachers need an open individualized teaching environment, others need to lecture and still others are somewhere in between. It is important for the teachers' morale and energy level that they be allowed to design styles best suited to their teaching and learning.

Teachers at the Center teach everything. They are not bound by unrealistic departmental curriculum packages or central administrative guidelines often decades old. Although there are curriculum requirements at the Center, the experience of the program has been that when students and staff are given input into the curriculum in such a way as to utlize their strengths, the energy produced by that collaboration precludes the question of meeting anyone's minimum standards. Students allowed to participate in the development of their own program of study seldom short-change themselves. In addition students are permitted to choose the teaching style most conducive to their needs. As a result they are allowed, and often encouraged to change basic skills teachers to help them more readily work to their potential.

The materials for basic skills curriculum are as varied as the program can possible allow. They range from traditional texts and workbooks to audio-visual aids and materials on the city, such as newspapers, brochures, and pamphlets. Within the parameters of the city as a curriculum guide, no one is denied access because of the level of their learning, their educational background, or their lack of academic experiences. The city as a learning device is a great equalizer acting as the base from which the program builds the students'

curriculum. This process allows the students to build a set of beliefs about themselves and in their abilities to learn. Students bring their own city skills--survival skills--developed in the daily life of the community to their program of study. When basic skills classes are working to peak efficiency, it is a multifarious experience. A casual observer can often find twenty students in each class working at as many different tasks, all of which are of equal worth to the staff and to the students involved. More importantly, too, basic skills classes do not necessarily have to take place at the Center. Classes often are held at such external resources as the main branch of the Boston Public Library. Students can also report to various project locations in the city or tutor other students and receive credit for their basic skills class even though they may be out of the class itself.

Such diversity is not without its problems. It takes a ferocious energy level for teachers to work out with their students a basic skills curriculum. It is difficult to administer and monitor sufficient materials on an individual basis to make experiences meaningful for students over a long term period. Without the aid of student teachers and volunteers to assist in the classes and to diversify the responsibilities, the Center would have a difficult time producing results satisfactory to

its goals. Another problem is that the success of the basic skills approach is to a large extent dependent on the maturity of the students. Since its inception the majority of students have reacted favorably to the freedom generated by the Center's academic philosophy. There are, however, students whose needs are not met by the program. Some feel more comfortable with a traditional learning style. These students re-enter the regular classroom by choice.

Seminars

A major academic feature of the Urban Studies Center program arethe afternoon sessions, called Seminars. As many seminars are offered as there are teachers available. Their major focus is to integrate the academic subject matter with the city-based learning experience. The city as a classroom permeates the entire program. Media is used extensively as a tool to facilitate this objective. Over the years, many different strategies have evolved around the seminar concept utilizing the availability of resources and varied teaching styles. However, the basic premise has remained the same, the profitable usage of the city as an educational tool.

The seminars introduce students to much of their own city to expand their views of their educational environment

which are often parochial and limited by their neighborhoods. The thrust of the seminars, therefore, is to reduce the isolation of the students to the city.

The Gardner Museum is an excellent but little known museum in the Fenway section of Boston. Four Urban Studies students, Jane and Barbara, black students from English, and Cheryl and Maria, white students from the then Roslindale High School, worked on a group project at the museum. After completing their research they presented a written and visual report.

That educational exercise touched a number of issues far more important than learning about the museum. The students learned that they could work together on a difficult project in a group setting even though they were of different races, schools and neighborhoods. They received some insight into a class structure that allowed Mrs. Gardner to amass such wealth and to display it so sumptuously. The students began to understand that art was more than an "academic" subject. Finally, they learned more about themselves by learning about the world in which they live.

Another example of a seminar project took place during Boston's Bicentennial celebration. Cheryl, a black student from English, decided to do a project on Boston's Black Heritage Trail. She developed a linkage

with the Afro-American Museum. She subsequently became so adept at her project that the Museum hired her as a tour guide for the summer tourist season.

Michael came to English by way of Charlestown. He worked on his Bicentennial project somewhat reluctantly at first. However, when he found that he could join his project to a merit badge he was working on for his scout troup he became enthusiastic; so enthusiastic, in fact, that he became the Urban Studies expert on revolutionary Charlestown. He was soon able to lead field trips and conduct classes on "his" subject.

He did so well with his scout troup that he was selected as one of only five scouts in the metropolitan area to welcome and escort scouts visiting Boston for the Bicentennial. In time, Michael became so interested in the subject that he joined a bicentennial militia company. Michael has since paraded before the Queen of England and visited several other cities with his troop.

Using the reality of the city for seminar projects can have moments of considerable tension. During the height of the anti-busing ferment, Landsdowne, a black attorney on his way into Boston City Hall, was attacked at the entrance by a sizeable group of white youth. This attack was recorded by a photographer who took a picture of a white youth stabbing Landsdowne

with an American flag.

At the time of this incident, a group of Urban Studies students were in City Hall on a project. Several black students came to Lansdowne's aid and helped disperse the crowd. For the next several days that incident became the curriculum of the Urban Studies Center with the students involved leading a number of the discussions. The effect on the program was beneficial. Students, both black and white, had first hand experience with the senseless violence bred of intolerance.

The reality of the city has always been a part of the students' lives. The Urban Studies Center attempts to make it a part of their lives in school as well with the belief that it is far more difficult for the curriculum to become stale or irrelevant when the immediacy of the city is brought into the classroom. The attendance figures of which the program is so proud are often seen as affirmation of student interest in this kind of curriculum.

Student Evaluations

The Urban Studies Center uses several different methods to evaluate student progress. As a Boston public school, English must utilize the computerized report card. The Center staff, however, believes that

this form of evaluation is limited at best; the card merely serves the needs of a large system. It dehumanizes the educational process and is practically pointless to many students.

The Center has, therefore, developed its own hand-written report card to augment the city's. (See figure 5.) The significant departure from the system's card is the ability, and indeed the responsibility, for Urban Studies staff to write comments. Report cards at the Center are communication devices. They are an attempt to engage the students actively in the process of assessment; they intend to be supportive documents. This is not to suggest that no one fails at Urban Studies for this is clearly not the case. The point is, a failure speaks by itself. It is the positive evaluation which deserves reinforcement and acclaim.

The most common Urban Studies assessment is the student contract. Students, or a group of students and a staff member, contract to complete a certain amount of work in a specified period of time to a stated standard. Marks are given as progress reports and upon completion of projects. Tests are infrequently used at the Center; when they are, however, they are usually of the pre-test and post-test variety.

FIGURE 5

REPORT CARD

The Urban Studies Center
152 Arlington Street
Boston, MA 02136
Tel. 482-4152

A City-Wide Flexible Campus Program of the English High School

Name _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Home School _____ Advisor _____ Semester _____

Attendance Data Present_____ Absent_____ Tardy_____

Courses and Points per Half Year Semester

Individual Skills Development:
Math_____(2 1/2 pts)
English_____(2 1/2 pts)
Career Exploration

Media Production (2 1/2 pts):
Television/Video
Photography/Darkrook
Newspaper/Journals

Seminars (2 1/2 pts):
Urban Studies
Art in the City
Environmental Science

Physical Education (1/2 pt):

Total Points Earned This Semester_____

Comments:

Another prominent feature of the marking system, especially in basic skills, is the public nature of much of what is done. A sheet listing the students' names and a wide variety of assignments is posted on the wall of each of the basic skills rooms. (See figure 6.) Since the work is individualized, the sheet has generalized headings, made more specific by staff or student notations concerning assignments and projects given and due. Students are able to keep abreast of all work for the term as well as the staff's response to that work, merely by looking on the wall. This system has value for those students who have attendance problems, who may be tardy or who may be working on special projects requiring them to be other places during the basic skills time. They are able to keep up and still participate in special projects.

Multi-Cultural Component

A primary impetus for starting the Urban Studies Center was the need for staff and students to work in a pluralistic setting, reflective of the American experience. Since its inception, the Center has never lost sight of this goal, either in attempts to balance the program racially or to reflect the pluralism of the city in its curriculum and activities. Indeed, given the recent

FIGURE 6

STUDENT ROSTER

O'Malley Homeroom	Attendance M	T	W	TH	F	VOCAB	COMPOSITION	MATH	CAREER EXPLOR.	CLASS PARTICIP.
Charles Cooper										
Ken Landrumn										
Brad Wigfall										
Dennis Davidson										
Veronica Horesly										
Bernadette Izzard										
Brian Kane										
Phil Kotska										
Mark Merner										
Robin Parham										
Brenda Pennant										
Yvette Young										
Ronald Powell										
Raul Noe										
Al Brown										
Margueritte Riviera										
Eileen O'Brien										

tragic history of the Boston Public Schools, race relations are more than a moral issue. They are in fact an issue of professional competence.

The program has developed many strategies, both formal and informal, to promote learning. A major purpose of the Urban Studies Center has been to provide students the opportunity to work with and experience the realism of the racial and ethnic pride so evident in many of the students. The program does not believe that pride can be taught; nor does it believe that formal curriculum packages on pluralism or ethnic studies are the answer. The most successful strategy for the Center has been to allow pride to develop from student contacts with the facts presented by working in the city. This strategy has been useful with students who are seeking to accept and appreciate their own ethnic heritage. The pride that is developed in this internal way is most easily shared with other members of the program. It allows students to move at their own pace to assimilate those aspects of the culture most meaningful to them.

Until the 1977 school year, the multi-cultural curriculum was an overview, permeating the program as a whole. In 1977, a proposal was written to bolster that commitment by adding a staff person whose primary function would be to deal with multi-cultural issues and to

develop a resource room. The proposal was accepted and funded in December 1977. The proposal states:

> This closeness makes vital the students' understanding of their feelings about students from ethnic, racial, and geographic groups, different from their own and the feelings of the other students on these subjects. Urban Studies can provide an environment where using a small group process, these feelings can be expressed in an academic setting.

The intent was "the incorporation of multi-cultural and non-stereotypic curriculum and activities into the Center's overall program."[1]

The program was very well received by the staff and students at the Center and put to rest the expressed fear by the proposal writers that some staff would leave vital concerns relative to multi-cultural education to the new staff person and lessen their own involvement. Contrary to this the Center staff in conjunction with the new member are working together as a unified group to strengthen curricular activities. A recent evaluation conducted by a local research firm indicated that the program was "working very well and had produced good results."[2]

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[1]Marianne Boswell, "A Proposal for a Multi-cultural Component for the Urban Studies Center," (Spring, 1976), p. 4.

[2]Beacon Research Associates, "Interim Evaluation Report, Boston English/Urban Studies Center, 1977-78 School Year," (March 15, 1978).

Career Exploration

Career exploration as a focus has found a natural home at Urban Studies. Simply stated, it is an attempt by the program to have students look at their futures. What could be more natural than exploring future goals in career and vocational aims in the reality of the city? It would be unreasonable to expect career courses provided solely within the four walls of a traditional classroom to have the necessary impact on students.

At Urban Studies, the general strategy used is multi-faceted. Students in basic skills classes, for example, gain experience by examining career possibilities, working with career and vocational texts, writing resumes and working on projects related to career goals. The Center has been able, through various funding grants such as ESAU and Chapter 636, to amass a functional library of texts, resources and materials in the vocations.

To complete their experience in the career exploration phase of the program, students must work their way through a standard series of three projects. (See figures 7, 8, 9.) They must research a chosen vocation, interview a student or another person studying or applying for that vocation, as well as interview an individual actually working in that chosen field. The culmination of the project is a vocational videotape, prepared by

FIGURE 7

CAREERS PROJECT DIRECTION SHEET

Step 1: Choose career area (example health) (one based on your knowledge)
Choose specific job (" nurse)
If possible exact type (" pediatrics nurse)

Step 2: Library research --Answer below questions about your career area using following three areas:

A. U.S. Occupational Handbook (reference section)
B. Hard cover books (card file) (ex. "So you want to be a dentist.")
C. Magazine articles (ex. "The Dentist in 1980.") Readers Guide

Answer these questions on your career, print neatly or type.

1. Years of schooling needed
2. Exact duties
3. Salary (min-max)
4. Opportunities to advance
5. Hours, vacation time
6. Working conditions
7. People I will come in contact with
8. Will there be jobs of this type in the 80's
9. Any other facts that will help evaluate this career for you.

(List all books & magazines used stating Title, author, pg & date.)

Step 3: Interview (example nurse) can be written or typed.

A. Before interview become very familiar with instruction sheet "How to Interview"
B. In arranging interview try not to tie up person too long. Let them set time and place. Be Courteous.
C. Make sure you ask them both the good and bad side of their job.
D. Ask yourself if this person is happy in this field, try to determine this by asking good, clear questions without prying.
E. If you do not get good info try another interview.

Step 4: Optional--Interview student in this career (example: nursing student)

Step 5: Optional--Include slides or photos taken of career person "on the job"

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN MORE THAN ONE FIELD ADDITIONAL CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN.

FIGURE 8

INTERVIEWING STUDENT CAREER PROJECT

The following are questions that would make your interview of a student in your career choice a SUCCESS!!

---

1. Do you like it here?
2. What is total cost?
3. Do you commute or live in dorm? own apt? cost? what do you prefer?
4. Kind and types of stduents? teachers? from where?
5. What courses do you like? dislike?
6. Professors or teachers like or dislike? qualified?
7. Size of classes, small? large?
8. Sports, P.E. Classes? Intramurals? Varsity?
9. quality? cost? where do you eat?
10. Social life, dances, parties, fraternities, clubs?
11. Financial help, Are there scholarships? loans? grants?
12. Jobs, Are you working also? part-time? full-time? is this difficult? can I get a job here?
13. Are you married? kids? Is it difficult to go to school too?
14. Do you like going to school in the city? country? suburbs?
15. Can you make friends easily here?
16. Does the school placement office help you get a job? How important are grades? recommendations?
17. Do you feel your college (school) work is relevant to what you will be doing when you leave?
18. Would you go to school here if you had to do it over again? Where would you go? Why?

FIGURE 9

INTERVIEWING--WORKER ON THE JOB--CAREER PROJECT III

Jot down answers to these questions or if possible tape on cassette. These questions are only a guide. You may ask any questions specific to this career area you wish.

---

1. What is a typical day like for you? What do you do specifically?
2. What types of special schooling do you need? Degrees earned? Are you still going to school? Did you major in this field in school?
3. What types of people, machines, deadlines do you come in contact with? Who is your boss(es)?
4. What is your salary range (Be careful here--person should not have to answer this).
5. Are there opportunities to advance here?
6. How are working conditions? fringe benefits? etc? Give interviewee opportunity to decline answering here.
7. What are the hours/wk, number of days, paid vacations, etc?
8. What licenses or certificates do you need for this job? How do you get certified?
9. If it is possible, ask to see someof the forms, machines products, people, tools that this job comes in contact with.
10. Are there some seasons of year busier than others?
11. What does future look like in this field? (Around Boston?)
12. If you had to do it over again, what area would you select? (Does not have to answer this one, optional.)
13. What kind of qualities or characteristics are needed to be happy in this career?

USING YOUR LIBRARY RESEARCH YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ASK MANY MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS AREA.

See Mr. Rivers for ideas.

students working in groups of three or four, based on the previous activities, which is added to the Urban Studies Center resource library.

Students have responded favorably to this activity. It fosters student individuality and provides the freedom to ascertain what is really happening in the world of work. It is a valuable supplement to what students read about careers. Plans are already underway to expand the program to include all students at the Center not just seniors.

Field Trips

The Urban Studies Center serves students from as many as twelve different Boston high schools, representing most of the city's neighborhoods. To help unify this diverse student body, the Center sponsors program-wide field trips to various historical, cultural, political, recreational, and religious sites in the city. These trips supplement those taken by students in their academic seminars and provide students with a simple introduction to various cultural opportunities with which they may not have been familiar. More importantly, however, they help strengthen group building processes and the development of a sense of community at the Center; and are considered key elements in the strategy for breaking down the isolation that results from this diversity.

Governance

The Urban Studies Center is a separate site alternative program. It is a Boston Public School Program. As such, there is a systematized chain of command, culminating in a teacher-in-charge. For the Boston Public Schools, this is where the concept of governance ends; for the Center this, however, is where the concept begins. It is no secret that the program succeeds or fails on the energy level of the staff and students. It takes more than an administrative function to make the Urban Studies Center a success; it takes a community working together. Since the program is a shared learning experience, part of that sharing must include joint participation in its governance.

The Center advocates that students must take responsibility for their own education. This is not an easy task. Students must feel they have a legitimate stake and a meaningful role in what they are doing. They participate only to the extent they feel able to impact the system. Thus among the several strategies used at the program for sharing governance is a student council, which has a major role in the functioning of the program. In addition a weekly forum, or town meeting, allows the entire community to meet and share experiences. Informal staff meetings, during break time or at any place where the staff happens to be, are also open to student input.

Sharing is often less difficult at a program like Urban Studies where people have voluntarily gathered around a common set of goals. And while the level of commitment to those goals varies widely, there is a sense of shared community towards reaching those goals. Almost every evaluation of the program speaks positively of the quality of the relationships at the Center, and states how good students feel about themselves in the educational process that has been developed.

Media

It is ironic that while the media component is responsible for much of the program's early success, it has never found a satisfactory place in the total curriculum of the Center and holds a rather ambiguous place.

The Urban Studies Center is multi-media oriented. Video tapes, darkroom and print media, such as newspapers and journals, provide useful resources for student projects or class assignments. An important feature of media is its flexibility in appealing to students from many educational backgrounds, and has become a major tool in decreasing racial, sexual and geographic isolation. Students working in teams using audio visual equipment in the city join together to form a setting for positive interaction.

However, there are significant problems involved with the use of media. Despite the Urban Studies Center's long history and positive experience using media, those involved have never resolved the problem of what its proper place should be in the curriculum. As an educational tool, media can often overwhelm an academic subject. Process becomes subordinate to product. Many academic pursuits cannot overcome the interest generated by visual media. As a result the program has cancelled the media class as a separate entity believing it was over-emphasized in the curriculum. Instead, media has been integrated into all classes, but always subordinate to the focus of the lesson plan. No special time is now allocated for media largely because the program does not consider itself competent, either by the nature of the equipment it possesses, or its staff training, to function as a vocational course in media. Everyone in the program is exposed to media, but only those who wish to give of their own time may make media a major concentration.

Other problems plague media as well. Very expensive, both hardware and software are hard to obtain from modern funding sources. School budgets more often than not preclude its purchase. However, once obtained the equipment suffers breakdowns from prolonged classroom use causing expensive reparis, or falls prey to vandalism and

theft.

At the Center, however, the original video equipment secured six years ago is still in daily use. This fact is a tremendous tribute to the students in the program who have taken the equipment, unsupervised, to every corner of the city. It has never been stolen or abused. As funding to replace the equipment does not appear possible, it is their responsibility alone which allows the present video program to continue.

On balance, media is a worth while effort that adds a stimulating experience to any program. It is not, however, a panacea. It can backfire. Programs must, therefore, continuously evaluate their effectiveness to insure that staff and students meet the goals of the program and not those of a media product. As a wave of the future, media may well be over-valued but as a curriculum tool it may just now be coming into its proper perspective.

The Program Prospers

There are many reasons that account for the growth and development of the program over the years. The changing environment of the schools helped to shape the program. Each year the staff gained experience in running an urban alternative school which led to an upgrading of the curriculum. A significant factor in this growth was

the help the program received from the various collaboratives it had entered into over the years. The following highlights some of the focal points of those joint efforts.

English High School Collaboration

The Center was founded in 1971 as an English High School Program designed to improve the educational conditions of a small group of freshmen students, in what was then a desperate educational environment. The academic structure had collapsed. Deliberately segregated, all male, mainly black, and weakened financially by the system, the school was close to chaos. A few teachers, however, believing the situation could be improved, joined together to propose and initiate a program called "The City."

This small, in-school program gave rise to a relationship which has endured throughout the history of the Center. It has confirmed for all its participants that the program is indeed a public school program, operating within the framework of the Boston public schools. This did not change when in the following year the program moved to a location separate from English.

There have been clear benefits to the Center from the English High School collaboration. In addition to the close connection to the Boston public schools, the majority of Center students have come from English. As a result the Center has been able to utilize English's guidance

counselors, its sports facilities and teams. Special events, such as the visit to English by Alex Haley, were also available to Center students.

Urban Studies has further benefited by the enlightened leadership of the English High School administration which has been critical to its growth and development. This leadership has provided valuable support when needed. English has acted as fertile ground for the recruitment of not only students but staff and, through the collaboration with the University, of ideas. It is fair to say that without support of one of its headmasters, Robert Peterkin, the program could not have reached its present state of development. His support and trust in the Urban Studies Center, its students, staff and way of learning provided the space necessary for the program to develop on its own.

The Institute of Contemporary Art Collaboration

A great influence on the Urban Studies Center was its early collaboration with the Institute of Contemporary Art. The Institute, a modern museum with upper class backing, joined the Center in the spring of 1972. This collaboration lasted the entire 1973 school year. Its purpose was to provide students with the opportunity to explore, examine and communicate about the urban environment, human and physical through the use of the

visual arts. Receiving funding from a number of private foundations, VALUE, as the joint venture was called, demonstrated that the process of education takes place wherever a responsive environment may be found and not exclusively in a classroom or the school.[3]

The main focus of the study according to a booklet published in September 1974 was Boston Harbor and its islands.[3] To help carry out the program's goals, additional staff beyond the two Center teachers were identified. The Institute hired a director, a deputy director, and three part-time staff versatile in the arts. VALUE hired professional artists to work with students over specified short periods of time during the course of the program, while college interns were recruited as part of the program's staff and received credit for mini internships.

The major benefit to the Center of this collaboration was the introduction to its program of the visual aspects of studying the city. This visual orientation has been a feature of the Center ever since. A corollary benefit to the staff was the training they received in the use of visual materials and media, particularly in such sophisticated media systems as video tape.

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[3]VALUE, September 1974.

The major drawback to this collaboration was that the Institute was outside the Boston Public School System. The Institute had goals which were their own, and not necessarily those of the school system, often resulting in clashes on such issues as academics, scheduling, and grading. In the spring and summer of 1973, internal struggles and funding difficulties forced the Institute to cancel its educational programs and thus, the Urban Studies collaboration.

Metropolitan Programs Collaboration

The Urban Studies Center was a pioneer in metropolitan programs for the Boston Public Schools. In fact, one of the major reasons for Urban Studies becoming a separate site alternative was to provide a more neutral ground for the interaction of urban and suburban students. Students from Watertown, Ipswich, Cohasset, Newton, Framingham, and Brookline High Schools have participated in the various offerings provided by the Center. It is perhaps significant that these solidly middle-class suburban schools joined the Center while the closer, more working class suburban communities which ring Boston, did not. In either case, the major suburban collaborations with the Urban Studies Center, or indeed with the Boston Public Schools, only lasted for a short period.

These collaborations revolved around the common theme of urban and suburban cooperation and coexistence. Typical of the collaborations with the Center was a program called Urban Discovery, between the Urban Studies Center and the Cohasset Public School System in 1975. The proposal for that program recognized that there was a need "to reduce racial isolation" as well as "urban and suburban social isolation." Also stated as a learning objective for the Cohasset students was "the need to develop more positive concepts among Cohasset students concerning city life and its resources."[4]

Though the program ran only two days a week for the spring semester, the collaboration was well received by both the students and staff. Students from both schools worked on projects in mixed groups, using media in their exploration of the city. Each group of students was able to contribute to the learning environment for each other. An evaluation of the program conducted by a participating student was positive in its findings. The report stated that "students felt a new freedom, and they felt comfortable interacting socially with each other;" and that

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[4]Cohasset Public Schools, "Magnet Educational Program Project Proposal--Urban Discovery," (Spring, 1976).

"students felt working towards a common goal tended to eliminate personal and racial confrontation."[5]

Despite this apparently successful attempt to join urban and suburban students, the attempt to continue their collaboration for another year was disapproved by the Cohasset School Committee in a four to two vote. The demise of the collaboration was reported in an article which appeared in the local Cohasset paper. The article stated that "committee opponents claimed the state was throwing away money it does not have; supporters contend that isolationism and fears killed the proposal." One committee member voted no because he felt that the proposal was "diluting the educational process by sending children out of the classroom."[6] The support of two board members, the superintendent, teachers and students was not enough to keep the proposal alive. Some observers in both communities could not be faulted for believing that the absurd reasons given for disapproval had racist overtones. It is not coincidential that all Urban Studies collaborative efforts with suburban school systems were ending around this time.

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[5]Emily Kiernan, "Final Evaluation--Urban Discovery Project," May 28, 1975.

[6]"Inner-City Program Rejected," Cohasset News, p. 7.

Flexible Campus Program

A major goal of the Urban Studies Center continues to be to have a positive impact on the curriculum of the Boston Public Schools. An early strategy to effect this goal was to join the program to the network of student options that had been established within the Boston school system under the heading of "Flexible Campus."

There were several reasons for this initiative. If the Center were to influence the system, it needed a system-wide constituency. Secondly, a city-wide program base allowed the program to more readily address its primary goal of reaching the widest possible spectrum of students. The concept of pluralism took on new significance with this collaboration. Lastly, the coordinators who helped with student recruitment became advocates of the Urban Studies Center within the system. This has since proven a valuable asset to the program.

The Flexible Campus program describes itself as "an alternative approach to the traditional classroom learning situation," providing participating schools "the flexibility to develop programs both on and off campus, in an effort to better meet the changing needs and interests of their students." The program literature lists an impressive array of objectives, both general and specific, all related to its overall goal of opening the curriculum for

the city's high school students.

In only a very few high schools, such as English, has there been any real progress towards the ultimate goals of the program. Unfortunately, many schools viewed the Flexible Campus coordinator as an extra person on staff responsible for such extra duties as preparation for school evaluations or running graduation exercises.

Urban Studies has been joined with Flexible Campus for almost its entire existence with a successful record of collaboration. The Flexible Campus program has helped systematize and publicize the Urban Studies Center. Visitors to the system looking for new programs offered by the Boston Public Schools, are often routed through the Center.

A further benefit of the collaboration has been the dissemination of information about the program city-wide as a part of Judge Garrity's desegregation order. Each year the City of Boston must, in a multi-lingual format, send parents and students descriptions of all schoolsand programs so they can choose the following year's courses. (See figure 10.) The Center includes a write-up that appears in these booklets. Now despite a movement away from Flexible Campus, mini-schools, and a lessening of support for student options nationally, the Flexible Campus and Urban Studies Center continue to collaborate.

FIGURE 10

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

materials and support services at the middle and high school levels for Hispanic, Chinese, and Italian bilingual students.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Title VII office at 726-6296.

FLEXIBLE CAMPUS PROGRAM

The Flexible Campus Program is a school-sponsored, career-oriented program for high school students. Each Boston high school develops and administers its own Flexible Campus Program. No two programs are identical.

The program includes both on-campus and off-campus educational opportunities. On-campus activities include mini-courses, guest speakers, film series, field trips and tutorial services. Off-campus options in such areas as career education and work-study are available with cooperating universities, business establishments, as well as social, cultural and governmental agencies.

The Head Master is responsible for the administration of the Flexible Campus Program through the Flexible Campus Coordinator.

FLEXIBLE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM

The Flexible Admissions Program is designed to provide high school students who have not taken a college preparatory course with an opportunity to acquire and strengthen their basic skill competencies in preparation for admission to college. Students who successfully complete the program are guaranteed admission to any of the State Colleges. The course of study includes reading, language arts, math and science. Courses are offered at Boston State College two to four afternoons a week. The program usually begins in October and goes through May. The program is offered during and after the normal school day. The program is sponsored by the Urban Learning Center at Boston State College and has been dependent upon funding by the State College System. To date, openings have been limited to 100 students citywide. Suburban students also participate in the program. Counseling is provided.

To obtain further information, students should contact the Flexible Campus Coordinator in their assigned high schools during September. Openings are limited and students must enroll at the beginning of the program.

URBAN STUDY CENTER

The Urban Study Center is a program for high school juniors and seniors sponsored by the Boston Public Schools. It is designed to allow students to study aspects of life in the city. Students are required to complete an individual as well as a group project. Students attend the Center five days a week for varying lengths of time.

The program is staffed by teachers from English High School. The Center is presently located at:

152 Arlington Street
Boston, MA 02116

To obtain further information, students should contact the Flexible Campus Coordinator at their assigned high school.

ANOTHER COURSE TO COLLEGE

Another Course to College (ACC) is a joint program of the Boston Public Schools and the University of Massachusetts, Boston. It is a two-year intensive college preparatory program which covers a student's junior and senior years of high school. Students do not have to have previous college course experience to apply. The program is open to students in all of Boston's high schools with the exception of students in Boston Latin Academy, Boston Latin School, and Boston Technical High School.

ACC is presently housed in the Peter Faneuil School, 60 Joy Street, Boston. Students attend classes there full time but remain enrolled in their assigned high school. They become official members of the University of Massachusetts student body and have access to various university facilities. Students interested in participating in this program should contact their Flexible Campus Coordinator or the Guidance Counselor in the home high school in the Spring.

For further information contact:

John Regan, Teacher-in-Charge
ACC — U. Mass/Boston Program
Peter Faneuil School (Present location)
60 Joy Street
Boston, MA 02114
742-5711

EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE FOR GREATER BOSTON, INCORPORATED

The Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Incorporated (EdCo) is a private, non-profit corporation organized in 1969 and now serving 13 communities. It is a multi-purpose collaborative. EdCo responds to the needs of its member system by developing and operating a wide range of educational programs. EdCo is located at:

20 Kent Street
Brookline, MA 02146

PROJECT SPACE

Project Space is a program in occupational education. It focuses upon the needs of high school age students who have not succeeded in conventional education. "Classrooms" are in unusual settings located in businesses and agencies in the Greater Boston area.

University of Massachusetts/
English High School Collaboration

A particularly useful collaboration of the Urban Studies Center in recent years has been with the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and its work at the English High School. This multi-faceted collaboration has a long history, but it was not until a summer workshop in 1975, that a formal proposal was written and eventually accepted for this collaboration.

As the then President of the University, Robert Wood, wrote to English's headmaster, Robert Peterkin, in June of 1975:

> The collaboration would have two major thrusts: the development of a series of alternative mini-schools within English High School and the offering of further education to members of your faculty and staff.[7]

Both of these goals were delineated in some detail in a summer's planning institute conducted by the University which utilized not only University faculty, but parents, students and staff from English as well.

The description for the collaboration stated that the University is "committed to the development of a range of programs for students, as well as to developing and implementing off-campus, degree-oriented staff development programs which address both institutional and individual

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[7]Robert Wood, Letter, June 20, 1975.

participant needs." It further recognized that

> the basic premise behind the University-English High School partnership is that each institution can fulfill its role and meet its goals more efficiently thrqugh working together rather than separately.[8]

The Center and its staff have taken full advantage of this collaboration. While Urban Studies existed prior to the collaboration, it was at that time only a small, two-teacher operation, concerned mainly with offering short-term media experiences in the city. As a result of the collaboration the program's fundamental goals have been re-thought and solidified. Program direction, previously a haphazard affair, has become more of a planned progression greatly benefitting staff and students alike. All of the Center's staff are participants in the School of Education's graduate program, a feature of the collaboration which has provided excellent service to the Center through the use of teaching interns and student teachers.

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[8]"The University of Massachusetts School of Education Graduate Program with English High School in Boston," University of Massachusetts (February, 1976), pp. 1, 2.

Summary

There have been many changes in the program over the years. Yet, there are certain basic components which continue. Except for the beginning, basic skills have been taught. The methods have changed with the staff and students but the commitment remains. Using "the City as a Classroom" has always been a part of the program. The pluralistic nature of the city has been utilized as an integral part of the curriculum as well as decreasing the isolation, racial, sexual, geographic, and economic, of the students. The program has always made use of its collaborations. Although these have changed over the years, the linkages with outside institutions have continually opened doors beyond the public school system.

These areas of consistency have aided the stablility of the program as it has evolved. From a part-time, in-school program, the Urban Studies Center has developed into a full-time, separate site alternative.

C H A P T E R I I I

THE CITY AS A CLASSROOM

"Cities are ecological laboratories," wrote Bailey in The City as a Classroom. "They are places where the shear numbers of interracting people provide a marvelous observatory for human behavior and for behavioral consequences." Beyond that, however, cities have abundant cultural, recreational, historical, industrial and social services to furnish the social and educational avenues for uplifting the self-image of inner-city children, developing positive self-concepts and offering resources of enjoyment and leisure for these same students.[1] Therefore, that any school system, particularly one such as Boston with its depleted and demoralized curriculum, can ignore the richness of the resources inherent in the city in which it operates is astounding. Yet, this is exactly what has happened and what continues to happen.

Bailey pointed out that "social injustice in the cities is a fantastic teacher." This is the reality of the every

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[1]Royce M. Phillips, "Practical Strategies for the Urban Classroom," in Urban Education: The Hope Factor, ed. Byrd L. Jones (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1972), p. 31.

day life for many of the students in the school system. Schools have become "tradition bound, custodial, crisis-ridden and cynical." They have lost their way. All of this in the environment of the city which is "the focal point for the creation and reproduction and display of almost everything that is beautiful and ennobling and memorable in our civilization."[2]

This isolation, however, no longer suffices for the education of American youth. Toffler stated:

> It is no longer possible to think of education as that which takes place within the confines of the four walls of the classroom. The walls are simply no longer relevant. It is no longer possible to keep the outside world at bay.[3]

And Shedd reported that "We should be getting away from the idea that instruction is contained by the structural walls of the school." In his varied career which included the superintendency of the Philadelphia schools during the period of the Parkway program, Shedd found that "Kids today are influenced like never before by the society around them." It is unfortunate that such influence has not had a corresponding effect on the schools of those

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[2]Stephen K. Bailey, "The City as Classroom," in Opening the Schools: Alternative Ways of Learning, ed. Richard W. Saxe (Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 327-336.

[3]Alvin Toffler, The Schoolhouse in the City (New York: Praeger, Inc., 1968), p. 7.

students.

For Shedd, "To create schools without walls then means both to take the classroom out into the real world, and to bring the real world into the classroom."[4] This is not easy, nor can it be done without problems. Glatthorn, a commentator on alternative education, found the merger of schools and the community has caused problems for some students who "were torn by the conflicting sets of demands upon their time and allegiance."[5] Finkelstein, writing on the Parkway Program, stated that often teachers are threatened by schools which have as their theme the city as a classroom. He recognized that at times, "community professionals are often in a better position than teachers to provide education which is timely, comprehensive and responsive to students' needs and concerns."[6] This can cause some anxiety and union-concern for teachers who are dealing with an open curriculum.

According to a Ford Foundation report the move for an open curriculum is not always smooth, but rather represents

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[4]Mark R. Shedd, "The Kinds of Educational Programs We Need Now" in Openning the Schools: Alternative Ways of Learning, ed. Richard W. Saxe (Berkeley: McCuthan Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 291, 288.

[5]Allen Glatthorn, Alternative Education, Schools and Programs (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1975), p. 115.

[6]Leonard Finkelstein, "Implementation: Essentials for Success," NASSP Bulletin 157 (1973) 39-41.

an "often controversial movement for community participation and education." The study did not urge abandoning the new alternative movement, but indicated that caution must be exercised at all levels at the initiation of such an endeavor. The Commission reported, for instance, that "some black groups attacked Parkway, arguing that some of the community resources it used were precisely those white, middle-class institutions that blacks have been distant from in the past."[7] Care must, therefore, be taken to unite the city and the classroom in such a way as to provide a rightful place for the aspirations and goals of the entire population. The legitimate aspirations of a pluralistic society cannot be ignored either in the school or in the society as a whole.

In an effort to promote this unification, the Urban Studies Center has made the city as a classroom the central theme of its curriculum since its inception. The rich resources of the city and the diversity of the students who have come to the Center have provided an exciting learning environment. However, such a vast amount of input, both from the city and from the students has not been easy to systemize into a rational curriculum. An early collaboration with the Institute of Contemporary Art acted as a catalyst to bring the elements of both city-resources and

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[7]Matters of Choice a Ford Foundation Report on Alternative Schools (New York: September, 1974), pp. 6,8.

diverse student bodies into a cohesive programmatic approach. This collaboration strengthened the Center's desire to examine the visual aspects of the city. The vehicle to facilitate that visual inspection was the media.

The pervasive force of media in our society, especially that of television, is becoming more and more evident. Still, its importance has had little impact on the traditional way that schools go about their business. For the vast majority of students now coming into the schools, television has been a predominent factor in their lives. Newsweek, examining the effects of television on children, reported that children under five watch an average of 23.5 hours of television per week. By the time a student graduates from high school, "he will have been exposed to 350,000 commercials and vicariously participated in 18,000 murders." The article concluded that "After parents, television has become, perhaps, the most potent influence on the beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior of those who are being raised in its all pervasive glow." The visual orientation to the world that television has produced in the students is staggering. If schools are to recognize the reality of the students' environment then this crucial aspect of their lives must be of primary importance. Television more than any other communication devise has become the mass medium wherein the majority of people

receive their information about the world in which they live.[8]

Educators have not handled the emergence of media and its technology very efficiently. They have tended to see media in terms of good and evil. Huebner wrote that

> Educators are held not just by the myth that the technology will overpower and destroy them. Some are also possessed by the opposite myth, that a new technology will save the world from ignorance and injustice and save education from the problems of its own institutionalization.[9]

These myths can be dispelled only by understanding--an understanding gained from an opportunity to explore the subject.

Winston stated that "the educational system forces all these newer media into the pattern of a book" and thus fails to come to grips with the essential reality. It is far from an easy task to deal with the visual nature of media, for as he pointed out, "All the systems of mass communications we have thus far invented have a one-way bias." They are "sources of information, not channels of information." This is a very hard concept for educators to deal with. "The problem exists for the educator to

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[8]Harry F. Waters, "What TV Does to Kids," Newsweek February 21, 1977, p. 63.

[9]Dwayne Huebner, "Technology vs. Man: What Will Be The Outcome?" Educational Leadership (February, 1974): 394.

humanize" the media.[10]

Purvis calls today's students "children of the visual world." It is his contention that for the student "learning as he comes to know it is not a result of interacting with his environment but becomes an association process." Purvis opposes the teaching of reading, verbal and visual skills in isolation and favors education "to improve total literacy." The problem of teaching total literacy is compounded by the need to humanize the media which is so powerful in the students' lives. The difficulty of the task may well explain traditional school systems' unwillingness to deal with the problem.[11]

The Urban Studies Center incorporated the concept of the city as a classroom with a visual learning environment as the mainstay of its program. Several major benefits have been noted from this collaboration. Five aspects of the program that will be examined here have been particularly responsive to a visually oriented city-based curriculum. It would seem that many aspects of a traditional school may also benefit in some measure by the creative use of the city as a classroom.

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[10]Brian K. Winston, "Self Help: The Media," Image Media (August, 1973) 321-324.

[11]J.R. Purvis, "Visual Literacy: An Emerging Concept," Educational Leadership (May, 1973): 714-16.

A Reality Based Curriculum

Schools sometimes have difficulty dealing with the reality of students lives outside of the school building. This has occasionally led to a gulf between the student and the school. The current media explosion has worsened the situation. The inner workings of the school are now being more exposed to public view bringing increased pressure on the schools to make them more responsive to the individual needs of the students entrusted to their care.

Some people see cherished goals such as upward mobility from educational attainment as a myth. One aspect of the schools most exposed for its banality and inconsequence, the curriculum, has remained compartmentalized and fragmented despite the clamor for relevance and openness. If the curriculum is as Wilson stated, "A planned set of human encounters thought to maximize learning,"[12] then there is nothing immutable about any one curriculum design. A curriculum should be appropraite to the time, place and students that are being served, utilizng the best possible configuration of these for maximizing educational goals. Peelle expressed "the belief is, that for education to be relevant,

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[12] L. Craig Wilson, The Open Access Curriculum (Boston: Ally and Bacon, 1972), p. 34.

especially for urban youth, it must have some vital connection to the social, economic and political structures of the real world."[13]

The Center has long recognized that students bring their experiences and backgrounds to school with them, whether or not the schools recognize it. Students are products of their environment and often learn infinitely more out of the school situation than they do within the four walls of a classroom. The program has found that by using the city as a classroom they have been able to act as facilitators, developing educational survival skills. The Center has attempted to join the resources of the school with the resources of the city. Schools can no longer ignore the community, nor can they compete with it. They must in fact, work with the community in which the school is located, in a planned and intelligent way. The experience of the Urban Studies Center has been that this cooperation leads to an exciting and interesting educational climate for both the students and the teachers.

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[13]Carolyn Peelle, " Where Children Learn," in Urban Education: The Hope Factor, ed. Byrd L. Jones (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1972), p. 52.

Informed Citizenry

Scribner wrote :

> Schools, however, serve more than one end. For some they socialize and distribute an official culture. For the economy, they train, assort and accredit. For a democratic nation, they meld citizens. Education is only part of their business.[14]

The complexity of society has enmeshed people in difficult problems. Issues, such as racism, sexism, class structure and the corruption of power in our society have everyday impact. We need a new sense of purpose which will help us realize our goal of individual freedom and equality. People must become involved with their own society.

The traditional four-wall approach to curriculum has never been particularly effective in preparing students for taking an active role as citizens. The walls have acted as barriers. The vast resources schools and their students could bring to bear on issues of national concern have not been felt. The dichotomy of school and society, student and adult, has become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Schools must become part of the community: its problems, its hopes, its aspirations, its future. They

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[14]Harvey B. Scribner and Leonard B. Stevens, Make Your Schools Work (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), p. 11.

must create a climate for the involvement of their students with the society in which they both exist.

The Urban Studies Center has helped students develop strategies for living in cities. These strategies have helped make them more concerned and more aware in order that they may become part of the renewal process of the cities. By integrating the city into the classroom, students are able to learn about the political and economic factors which shape their lives in ways most meaningful to them; they are able to develop an appreciation for the appearance and reality of the cities from a different perspective. In the laboratory of the city, students may become both teacher and pupil. The often ludicrous need that schools have felt over the years to spare students the reality of their own experience is destructive and cannot continue. Although programs such as the Urban Studies Center are a step in the right direction, they are not sufficient to counter all those needs. System-wide commitment to this reality is needed. The schools need the sense of purpose and America needs active and informed citizens.

Pluralism

Scribner argued that "we can assume, given the new legitimacy of pluralism, that diversity will be a powerful

theme in future educational policy."[15] Pluralism is a new word in educational circles for a very old fact in the American public schools. Historically, schools have done a poor job dealing with student diversity. Schools were and are still largely set up for their own convenience. The individual and cultural differences that students bring to the schools have been down-played, if not ignored. They have been seen as a problem to be overcome rather than a rich resource to be utilized. As a result the dignity of many students from the various ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds has been affronted. The Center believes that by extending the schools into the city, new and effective measures can be developed to allow for the diversity of all students, a diversity which has been a source of strength for the program since its inception.

Among the most pervasive and destructive myths permeating public education is the idea that the middle class ethic is correct for all students. Teaching middle class values is not the problem. It is teaching them in such a way as to degrade or negate those students who come from different economic backgrounds. Leacock stated the

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[15]Scribner and Stevens, Make Your Schools Work, p. 122.

problem clearly. "The middle class values being imposed on low income Negro children define them as inadequate and their proper role as one of deference."[16] This attitude cannot foster a spirit of pluralism in the schools.

The Center has found that role models in the real world are a useful counterbalance to the bias of the school. A central philosophic commitment of the program is that individuals live, work and learn together, and that goals, hopes and dreams be shared. It is not possible to be unjust to one group and expect the system to function for another. Howe wrote that "Bad schools in our cities perpetuate a poverty and an injustice and a weakness that daily saps all our lives."[17] Schools and communities must merge not merely for the sake of a better curriculum, but for the health and well being of the community at large.

It is not merely sufficient for students from various ethnic and racial backgrounds to act as members of student bodies. For programs to be truly effective, students must work and learn together and experience themselves as neighbors. Perhaps this finding of the Center can be instructive

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[16]Eleanor Burke Leacock, Teaching and Learning in City Schools (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 205.

[17]Harold Howe, III, "The City as Teacher," The Schoolhouse in the City, ed. Alvin Toffler (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 25.

for several of Boston's magnet schools. In many of the magnet programs now in existence in Boston, students from various parts of the city are drawn together for a curriculum purpose, yet very little formal attention is paid to the interaction of these various students once they come into the school. Perhaps by using a common ground, such as the city, and allowing students to work in small groups, the magnet schools will be able to reach their stated goal of a pluralistic student body.

In addition, the Center has found that there is another form of pluralism which has proved difficult for students. It is the explosion of complex organizations in the city. Silberman stated that "Pluralism in our society increasingly means a pluralism of organizations, as well as individuals."[18] Students who have been walled into traditional schools cannot relate well to these complicated mechanisms comprising their environments. Using the schools and teachers as facilitators, students can learn to deal with these important organizations effectively and perhaps humanize them in the process.

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[18]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 35.

Tracking

Phillips argues against the practice of tracking which denies students access to education and often denies them the validity of their own background. He writes:

> Any successful teacher must understand a child's experience and willingly allow that child the right to his own perceptions. But sensitivity to children's needs and an understanding of their homes and neighbors are not sufficient if they cannot be translated into concrete curriculum strategies.[19]

Despite being discredited, tracking exists in many schools on numerous levels. A number of excuses are given for this practice. These include not enough space, too many students, or too few staff. Whatever the reasons, tracking precludes effective schooling.

By using the city as a classroom, the Center has been able to curtail the abuses of this pervasive system. In the city-based curriculum, all students are able to buy into the educational process at a level of development appropriate to their own needs. College, business, or general courses do not exist at the Center. While the Urban Studies Center method is not perfect, it does provide a way for schools to push each student to his intellectual limit without resorting to the classifications necessary in the tracking system.

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[19]Phillips, "Practical Strategies," p. 32.

Life Long Learning

Silberman pointed out the multi-purpose nature of education. "More important, education should prepare people not just to earn a living, but to live a life--a creative, humane and sensitive life."[20] Public schools often view themselves as complete unto themselves. Schools develop students who learn how to learn in schools. What goes on in the real world is often not considered educational. Certainly, creativity and humanization are small parts of any traditional school's curriculum.

Schools need to pay attention to the future and learning of their students. The Urban Studies Center has tried to help students deal with a life time of learning such as learning on the job and in the community, learning through the media, and dealing with the bewildering variety of organizations and institutions.

On a simple level, it is important for students to know the vast resources available to them in a city and how to utilize them properly. With the expected increase

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[20]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 114.

of leisure time, this becomes even more important. Using a school as a resource, students can filter and analyze the new lifestyles and cultural events they come in contact with in their daily lives. A well planned investigation of city resources can make the term "culture shock" a less threatening reality.

On a more complex level, students in the city can learn to deal with the relationships and linkages which bind communities together and make them function. With a sympathetic school program, students and staff can experiment, develop strategies and analyze real situations important to a community frought with complexities. Students should be able to apply these skills to larger community concerns. Wilson believes that, "It should not be impossible for schools to think of their main task as the operation of a leadership training program for urban neighborhoods."[21] It is time schools made a deliberate effort to confront the problems of the cities in which they exist.

Learning how to learn is as trite an expression as it is an important concept. Traditional schools have not done well in this area. They have failed to see the relationships that the ability to learn outside of the classroom has to the world of work. Schools have often felt

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[21]Wilson, The Open Access Curriculum, p. 101.

that their academic disciplines prepare students for life, when, in fact, as Silberman asserts, "There seems to be little correlation between people's performance on the job and either the amount of education they have had or the marks they have received."[22] The learning of the schools is a process, not a product. What schools have to offer is a hope of a future life, not the mere reward of report cards in the institutional setting. At the Urban Studies Center, this process is recognized. It seems only natural that learning how to successfully manipulate the environment of a city can best be done using the reality of the city. If it is true that schools must broaden their curricula beyond the walls of the classroom, it must be equally true that schools must allow for the fact that learning takes place well beyond the years of a classroom as well.

Silberman stated the obvious, that, "There is and can be no curriculum suitable for all time and all students at a given time."[23] The argument for dissolving the walls of the classroom is not a plea for the total deinstitutionalization of the schools; it is rather, a call for an

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[22]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 65.

[23]Ibid., p. 332.

openness, a turn to reality. As the lack of parental and community support for urban schools intensifies, this reality becomes a crucial issue. Student attendance statistics are but one measure of the students' perceptions of the reality of the schools. The Urban Studies Center, a small program, has found that the city as a classroom has been an exciting and fruitful collaboration for its academic program. Howe stated that, "We cannot have good schools in bad cities and we cannot have good cities unless we have good schools."[24] The relationship is clear; the problem is simple. Help the schools. We all have a stake in the solution.

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[24]Howe, "The City as Teacher," p. 19.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDENTS AND THE PROGRAM'S EVALUATIONS

The dual purpose of this chapter is to describe the students served by the Urban Studies Center and to evaluate the program in relation to those students. An attempt will be made to provide a long-term evaluative look at the program from its inception through the end of the 1977/1978 school year.

Urban Studies Center students are urban in all their diversity and complexity. They are the products of a world in constant flux, of a society with its institutions in decline, and an environment that is in decay. Lifestyles change with dizzying speed. Drugs, sex, television, issues society prefers not to deal with are the realities of everyday life.

The cities are crowded with the dispossessed of American life; the minorities of race and culture; the poor who must confront the American reality of racism and socio-economic deprivation. The cacophony of pressures that bear down on urban youth are little understood by the adult world, particularly in its institutions.

Schools, the bastions of the status quo, have done little to meet the needs of this urban clientele. For

large numbers of urban students, the American dream dies in the classroom. The Boston Globe conducted an in-depth study of over 200 urban and metropolitan students in April, 1977. The results of the survey were not comforting. Muriel Cohen, a major educational writer for the Globe, wrote that, "Except for sleeping amd maybe watching television, students spend more time inside schools than everywhere else. But students can no more tell you what it's like going to high school in 1977 than a butterfly can tell what the cocoon is all about."

The study drew attention to the distance between the schools and their students pointing out that schools have done little to bridge this gap. One result is that schools have become largely irrelevant to the students they are supposed to teach. One student, asked what her school was like, replied, "Whaddya mean, whatsit like? It's high school. You just go, you don't think about it."[1]

It is from this distressing setting that the Boston Public Schools, and thus the Urban Studies Center, draws its students. The policy of the recruitment and acceptance of students into the program is called "open access."

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[1]Muriel Cohen, ed., "The Students of the '70's--A Glimpse into Their Lives," Boston Globe, April 17-20,1977.

This policy simply states that any student, irrespective of traditional school labels, may attend the Urban Studies Center. Pluralism as a programmatic goal would be meaningless if the program did not reflect the diversity of the society. That diversity has been a great resource and strength for the Center. It has brought a richness to the program that has been reflected in both its accomplishments and expectations for the future. Exclusivity in any form would destroy the program's credibility.

In a city where isolation is intense, such a policy is not without difficulties. It is not an easy task to reduce the isolation of race, neighborhood and economic status of a city which has enforced these divisions over the years. It is difficult to develop a comprehensive curriculum for students with diverse academic levels, backgrounds and interests. The program has served students in the same year who have been accepted into Harvard as well as those whose tasks at the Center have included learning to read street signs. These difficulties not withstanding, the challenge of a diverse student body provides for the rich benefits of the program.

Perhaps the Urban Studies Center experience in dealing with this unique population may be instructive for certain segments of the alternative education movement. Many programs offered as options to the

traditional curriculum, serve a narrow clientele, such as college-bound students or dropouts, or handicapped students. It appears difficult for such programs to deal with the reality of a diverse society from such a limited perspective. Schools and programs would do well to allow for the pluralism inherent in the community rather than seeking to serve organizational goals by segregating one population from the other.

The assessment of a program that serves such a diverse student body is not an easy task, yet, evaluation is necessary. The Urban Studies Center has benefited from the evaluation process, particularly, its internal evaluations. The key words are dialogue and listening. A continuous dialogue between the various components of the program as well as an honest commitment to listening to this dialogue are the Center's way of dealing with its diversity. It is unfortunate that such a valuable process does not lend itself to the objective presentation of a study such as this. Therefore, for the purpose of this study a strategy has been developed which will provide as comprehensive a look at the program as possible. The strategy will include all of those methodologies in place at the program, both formal and informal, that may be presented here. From this evaluation, an attempt will be made to make statements about the Center and its place

in an urban school system.

Evaluation Strategy

This evaluation strategy contains eight elements. Briefly stated, they are as follows:

1. Problems of an Urban Studies Center evaluation;
2. research in the evaluation of affective education;
3. statement of needs;
4. "inferences" relative to an Urban Studies Center evaluation;
5. external program evaluations;
6. presentation of hard data;
7. presentation of the results of a series of interviews of program participants, past and present; and,
8. interview results and their relationship to aspects of the program such as
   a. size
   b. informal atmosphere
   c. interactions: staff, student and community
   d. pluralism
   e. curriculum
   f. relationship to future, and
   g. problems of the program.

Problems of an Urban Studies Center Evaluation

A significant problem of a comprehensive Urban Studies Center evaluation is the fact that the program has never been required to present a formal evaluation of itself. Despite its seven year history and its many grants from federal, state and local agencies, narrative, written statements, and sometimes merely oral reports, were all that was required. Because the program never had a full-time administrator or secretary, formal reports were never volunteered. In fact, those written statements that were provided were always tailored to the audience the program was attempting to reach, and could not be considered true evaluative documents.

This absence does not contradict the Center's stated position that evaluations are crucial. Evaluation, as has been stated before, is an on-going, internal process at the program, with staff, students, parents and community participating at different times. Despite its informal nature, it has shaped the program's destiny. The Urban Studies Center has always felt that it has been a successful program within the Boston Public School system. It can be surmised that the system accepted this interpretation over the years for their support has

increased steadily, even without the presence of written documents. Both the small size of the program and the sometimes difficult nature of some of the students it has served appear to be among the reasons the system has acquiesced to an informal acquisition of knowledge about the program. It should be noted that the Boston Public Schools, during the time the program existed, seldom required formal, meaningful evaluations of any part of its operations. Perhaps, ironically, it was the school system which did not want to rock the Urban Studies Center boat. With so few options available to students in the city, several administrators would be hard put to know what to do with certain members of the Urban Studies community if they were returned to the main school population.

In several ways, the relative invisibility of the program has been a positive factor in its development. Since the Center is a program and not a school, many of the arduous details of "administrivia" were spared. The program was allowed to try new approaches and new curricula offerings with very little interference from central administration. Blessed with an understanding headmaster at English, the program was allowed to develop at its own pace. As the program tried to handle all of its problems internally, without resorting to the external structures of the system, it was allowed to be on its own. Admittedly,

there were greater concerns for the Boston Public Schools during the years of the Urban Studies Center.

However useful the benefits of the anonymity of the program have been over the years, the drawbacks to such invisibility have been considerable. A long term goal of the program has been to impact the school system. This goal has been particularly hard to realize, due to the program's lack of visibility. Thus, while over the years the system has granted the Center more and more recognition, culminating in this year's budget, it is still a proverbial small fish. A plan to add sufficient staff so that the program could develop an academic unit for all four years, revolving around the city as a classroom concept, has been painfully slow to realize with little expectation that it will be approved in the near future.

A major frustration for the program is that it cannot capitalize on its successes, especially in those areas where the school system at large has been weakest. For example, in the history of the Urban Studies Center, there have been no fire alarms in a city where such a problem is endemic. In addition, unlike many school situations in the city, racial incidents do not plague the Center; and, attendance statistics, a hallmark of the Center, have hardly drawn the attention that might have been expected. The reality of the matter is, a separate site location has

both attractions and difficulties.

A final problem inherent in an evaluation of the Center is a lack of hard data. Part of this can be attributed to the informal nature of the evaluations over the years. Part, however, must be attributed to the loss of a number of records when the program moved its quarters from 45 Myrtle Street to its present location as a result of the School Committee's decision to renovate the Myrtle Street site for an elderly housing project.

Research in the Evaluation of Affective Education

The Urban Studies Center's greatest success over the years has been in the area of affective education. This is often thought to be the strength of alternative education as a national movement, especially as traditional school systems have demonstrated little success in this area. Bills stated that

> Traditionally, public education has been a process in which a student learns what supposedly is important for him to learn. Little concern has been shown for the student as a person during the learning process.

This can be understood in light of the fact that "schools have had a singular concern for cognitive learning" because "The assumption is made by many people that the behavior of successful people results primarily from what they

know."[2]

This narrow public misconception is translated into school system behavior. For many educators cognitive education is the only reason for the existence of schools. Until the trauma of the federal court order and its violent aftermath, the Boston Public Schools had no policies for the evaluation of affective outcomes in its schools. Perhaps the stark reality of the violent upheavals that followed in the wake of that order are not as surprising as they have been made to seem. Certainly no school system in America at this time can give more dramatic testimony to the necessity of nurturing positive affective outcomes for its students.

Despite what appears to be the system's inability to deal with the importance of affective education, Paine correctly pointed out that, "Every teacher is aware that no matter what he or she does, affective learning takes place."[3] Paine further stated that, in fact, "Cognitive and affective outcomes interact to the degree that they are virtually inseparable" and that "Affective outcomes

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[2]Robert Bills, A System for Assessing Affectivity (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 1.

[3]David A. Paine, "Overcoming Obstacles to the Classroom Assessment of Affective Learning Outcomes," The Clearinghouse 49 (1976): 354-56.

directly influence learning and also constitute legitimate educational outcomes in themselves."

The Urban Studies Center has long advocated this belief. The problem of affective education has not been its inclusion into the Center, for it is indeed the Center's primary mission, but how affective outcomes can be measured. Paine correctly observed that "The attempt to state objective goals in terms of observable behavior or performance may be very difficult or impossible."[4]

Tyler, writing on educational assessments, spoke of a philosophy which is at the core of the Urban Studies Center.

> The purpose of education is not to develop a person who can behave in desirable ways within a school, but develop a person who has acquired ways of thinking, feeling and acting that are relevant to a wide range of human experiences.[5]

To realize this important goal, the affective domain must be joined to the cognitive.

Unfortunately, this philosophy is not readily acceptable to traditional schools. It is as if the difficulty in the evaluation of such goals preclude a school system's

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[4]David A. Paine, The Assessment of Learning: Cognitive and Affective (Lexington: Heath, 1974), pp. 58,67.

[5]James Tyler, "Assessment for Readiness" in Improving Educational Assessment and An Inventory of Measures of Affective Behavior, ed. Walcott H. Beatty (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1969), p. 8.

trying to implement them in the first place. The Center's strengths in dealing with affective educational outcomes are largely lost on a school system which does not consider them important. The frustration thus produced has at times affected the morale of the Urban Studies Center staff.

This frustration, however, does not lead to an abandonment of the program's commitment. Despite the hardships, the program staff often attempt to evaluate the affective nature of education at the Center. As Hickey stated, "For alternative education programs, at least those in public education, evaluation is part of today's reality." Yet this reality must be tempered, and defineable objectives agreed upon. "Let's agree on something: much of what is important to the learning process cannot be adequately defined in behavior or otherwise measurable terms." Despite the difficulties, the obvious overriding social necessity for developing a humane system, responsive to the needs of the students, is far more important than the technical problems inherent in the assessment of a particular strategy to reach these ends.

A final, and perhaps most important, finding from the literature applicable to the evaluation strategy of Urban Studies has been best expressed by Hickey: "We

must accept the fact that indirect measures become as important to evaluation and program improvement as conventional direct ones."[6] This is a central fact in the assessment of affective outcomes. As Payne stated, "The fact that great reliance is placed on inference in assessing affective outcomes must be accepted."[7]

Statement of Needs

The University of Massachusetts collaboration with English High School has been a valuable asset to English. As part of this collaboration an extensive in-service program was developed for the staff which focussed on the realities of the urban educational scene, and English High school in particular. As part of their coursework for the University several English High School faculty members in the spring of 1977 conducted a needs assessment relative to the importance of alternative programs at the school. Two of these staff members, Margaret Legendra and James Buckley, have allowed their work in this needs assessment to become part of this evaluative report.

Legendra surveyed student attitudes towards alternative programs at English. She administered a survey to three

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[6]M.E. Hickey, "Evaluation in Alternative Education," NASSP Bulletin 57 (1973): 103-109.

[7]Paine, "Overcoming Obstacles," p. 355.

classes of English High School students, representing all four grade levels. This survey found that 77.6 percent of those students interviewed who were already on the Flexible Campus program, were in favor of it. A total of 73.4 percent of the students surveyed responded favorably to the item, "I think more alternatives should be offered." Legendra was able to report that, "The majority of students responded to the questionnaire positively," and supported openning the curriculum of the school.[8]

In addition to the survey of students, Buckley conducted a survey of English High School staff. He was able to report that "With 93 percent of the respondents circling three or higher, there is reflected a strong need for alternative programs in the Boston Public Schools." Indeed, 50 percent of the faculty polled indicated interest in participating in such programs. Buckley concluded that there was genuine and strong support by English's staff for alternatives.[9]

Added to these surveys was a very supportive administration led by Headmaster Robert Peterkin. Because of his leadership, the need for openness in the curriculum was

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[8]Margaret F. Legendre, "Survey: Student Attitudes Toward Alternative Programs at The English High School," Spring, 1976.

[9]James F. Buckley, "Survey of English High Staff's Attitudes Towards Alternative Programs," Spring, 1976.

realized for the first time.

It is clear from these surveys that the need for an open curriculum existed at English High School. The Urban Studies Center felt this need both at English and in the system as a whole. Student interest in the program is evidenced by the growing waiting lists that have become a steady feature of the program. Unfortunately, the careful work done by English High School in trying to meet the needs of its constituency has neither been widely followed by other schools, nor by the school system as a whole. The secondary school curriculum is not characterized by a spirit of openness. The national alternative movement did not find fertile ground in the Boston Public Schools.

Inferences Relative to an Urban Studies Center Evaluation

Several researchers have commented on the fact that there is a need to take into account inferential information when evaluating the outcomes of a school. This would seem to be particularly necessary in seeking a total picture of the Urban Studies Center.

The Center, as has been previously mentioned, existed during a turbulent period of history for the Boston Public Schools. The culmination of this unrest came in the form of racism and violence, associated with a bussing program

resulting from a federal court order. The national reputation of Boston was shattered. The faith of its citizens, the safety of their sons and daughters, and the city's schools were badly shaken. Countless incidents were reported by the media of racial confrontations.

Despite this background, the Urban Studies Center has never had a major racial incident or serious altercation, a high tribute to the Center's students. Another example of the students' skills in interpersonal relationships stems from the difficult position of an open program, such as Urban Studies, with its immediate neighbors. The Center has existed with such neighbors as a school system office, an annex of a public school, and a school program called the English Language Center. Further the program has existed in two of the most prestigous neighborhoods in the City, Beacon Hill and the Back Bay Village section of Boston. While it cannot be said that problems never took place with these neighbors, it must be reported that no incidents serious enough for any of these neighbors to attempt to displace the Center have occurred.

An important factor in the Center's development, in fact its very existence, can be attributed to its success in obtaining external support. Although the core program is currently funded by the Boston Public Schools, many special features of the program, such as the media

component, still depend on outside funding. Throughout its history, the program has received support from NDEA, ESAA, Chapter 636 state funds, and private foundation grants. Evaluation of the program by these funding agencies has always been positive.

The use of much of this funding has gone into the purchase of media equipment. Video equipment purchased six years ago is still in almost daily use at the Center. This record contrasts sharply with the school system's usual ability to retain its equipment.

Perhaps, the most important positive inference of the program is that it is seven years old. Alternative programs have an average lifespan of only eighteen months. A further aspect of this inference is that the program has never been stronger, either in its budgetary support from the city, its support from parents and students, or the energy of its staff. The 1977/1978 school year, for instance, found the Center with its largest waiting list in its history, its first organized sports team, a prom, the largest annual ethnic city lunch, and the most active support from its parents it has ever received.

External Program Evaluations

The first external evaluation of the Urban Studies Center was undertaken when the program formed its collaboration with the Institute of Contemporary Arts VALUE program, 1973/1974. Funding for this program came mainly from private foundation grants. Two consultants were hired by the Institute to evaluate the program. Their primary methodology was student interviews.

The evaluation was most positive about those aspects of the program which included joining the visual arts to the curriculum of the public schools, the use of the city as a classroom, and the pluralistic nature of the student body. The evaluation found that the program "seems to have had a significant effect, especially considering the brevity of the six-week cycle on the interpersonal lives of most of the students." Students mentioned their gratitude at being "taken seriously" and at being "treated like adults." Staff interaction was also found to be positive. Students "felt that the informal friendly attitude of the staff made them take on a sense of responsibility for their work which they had also never felt before." The evaluators reported that "several white, urban students (including one from South Boston) spoke movingly about getting over their prejudice about blacks." The smallness of the

program and the ability to work closely with the staff, individually or in groups, was another major positive feature of the program for the students. "All of the students pointed out that the small group process had value, and was crucial to the program's success."

The evaluators noted several weaknesses of the program. "The most obvious improvement or addition would be having a black staff member." Another major weakness related to the six-week cycle structure of the program. Other problems noted centered on the quality of some of the field experiences as well as the capability of some of the speakers utilized by the program.[10]

The VALUE program, in its evaluation, reconfirmed several of the emerging Urban Studies Center program's goals, notably using the city as a classroom and the need for a pluralistic student body. The VALUE experience also enhanced the new program emphasis on the visual nature of the city, which has since then been a fruitful program outlook. The staff was further heartened by the evaluation's reaffirmation of several directions they hoped the Center would take.

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[10]Barry Bortnick and Carol Nordlinger, "A Report on the VALUE Program 1973-1974," Summer, 1974.

During the 1974/1975 school year, program staff conducted an informal evaluation which was for the most part a descriptive report of the program's activities for the year. It did, however, include, for the first time, attendance statistics. These statistics indicated that student attendance from all schools was 79.3 percent that school year. This figure positively received by the central administration has become a mainstay of the program's evaluation.

One section of this report included an independent evaluation that was done on a small collaboration the program had entered into with the Cohasset Public School system. The evaluator, a member of the previous year's VALUE staff, also utilized student interviews as the methodology for this evaluation. Her main focus was "concerning social interactions." She found very positive interactions between the students of Cohasset and Urban Studies and found "no indication of racial conflict." She felt that the small group method was an extremely effective devise at producing positive interactions. She did find, however, that the program could be aided by the addition of a staff person "trained in visual thinking."[11]

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[11]Emily Kiernan, "Final Evaluation Report--Urban Discovery Project," June, 1975.

In the 1975/1976 school year, a significant collaboration was entered into by the Urban Studies Center. Through the English High School, the Center began a profitable relationship with the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. It was at this time a formal relationship was established with the City of Boston's city-wide Flexible Campus program. Both of these collaborations produced external evaluations supportive of the continued growth of the program.

The Flexible Campus evaluation is significant, not so much for what it says, as for what it does. It signals for the first time a city-wide impact of the Urban Studies Center which however slight, reaffirms the program's commitment for working for change within the school system. In the evaluation of the city-wide program that year, the Center received a positive report, which is reproduced here in its entirety.

> The Urban Studies Center Metropolitan Resource Center should be continued during the 1976-1977 school year.
>
> The Urban Studies Center, a model metropolitan project received a favorable evaluation from students who participated in the program. An effort should be made to enlarge the program and serve larger numbers of students. The Center is unique because it provides inter-as well as intra-system cooperation.[12]

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[12]Ralph H. Berkowitz, "Evaluation of the Flexible Campus Program 1975-1976," School Committee of the City of Boston, Fall,. 1976.

The second external evaluation of the year came from the University collaboration. The interim report mentioned foremost the pressing need for a new site for the Urban Studies Center. "Because the program is in a building which they must vacate in June." The evaluation, under the heading of "major events and accomplishments that have been particularly successful," listed first "expansion of the Urban Studies Center." In a subsequent section of the report, the simple notation is made, "the staff of the Urban Studies Center needs to be expanded."[13]

For the 1976/1977 school year, the staff, as part of their course work at the University produced three evaluative documents. The director of the program completed a programatic assessment which was the result of a series of interviews with the program's students and parents. A staff member assessed student needs by interviewing students at the program. Another staff member evaluated the program in terms of its community aspects. In addition to these internal documents, two external evaluations were also conducted.

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[13]Aida Levi, "Interim Progress Report, English High School-University of Massachusetts Collaboration," Fall, 1976.

The director's evaluation tended to confirm some of the basic assumptions of the program. It found there was a "particularly strong, positive response" to the way the program treated students as mature individuals. It supported the program's goals of allowing students to be responsible for their own education. Curriculum based on the city as a classroom was thought to add excitement and interest to the program. And "media was seen as a useful tool to deal with learning in the city." Several of the students interviewed were alumni of the program. A heartening finding of the interviews was that these students had retained their positive feelings for the Center well after they had graduated from school. Several students called it "the best thing that ever happened to me in high school." [14]

Wilson interviewed fifty students to determine whether the program was meeting their needs. She found that despite program literature, students had their own agenda for coming to the Urban Studies Center, which often "had nothing to do with the write-ups." Students came to "get away from their home school." Several reported they were

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[14]Kevin P. O'Malley, "Program Assessment," The Urban Studies Center, Spring, 1976.

"sent" by their home schools. Students generally felt that the program met their needs and only one student interviewed felt that the home school was better than Urban Studies. Among the insights Wilson was able to gain from the study were that "Urban Studies is as valuable as it is different from home schools;" that differences should be highlighted; and that "the smaller scale and reduced confusion and tension are valued by the students." She also found that the interpersonal relationships of the program were the major facet of the students' positive feelings.[15]

Rivers in evaluating the community aspects of the program submitted a brief report commenting on the new career exploration aspect of the Center which intensified the program's interaction with the surrounding community. Reporting that it was well received, he found that the openness of the Center, its familiarity with the city as a resource and its media capabilities formed an excellent background for a realistic career-exploration project. His recommendations included a closer organization of these projects and the expansion of the career exploration segment to include all students, not just seniors.[16]

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[15]Angela Wilson, "Survey of Student Needs-The Urban Studies Center," Spring, 1976.

[16]Richard T. Rivers, "Community Aspects of the Urban Studies Center," Spring, 1976.

Lyman evaluated the English High School-University of Massachusetts collaboration. As such the Urban Studies Center was but a small part of her evaluation, it did, however, indicate that the Center was a fruitful part of the collaboration.[17]

Walker, of the University of East Anglia, visited the program in the winter of 1976. He was writing a case study on science education for the National Science Foundation. His evaluation of the Center, as part of that case study, provides additional insights into the program. Walker stated that, "as a visitor, I am struck by how much easier it is to talk to students here." The students reported "how much better it is here than in the main building." Commenting on the teaching style, he wrote that "the teachers don't identify themselves by subject to any great extent. To some degree, everyone teaches everything." He was impressed by the way people got along at the Center.

> Relationships do seem qualitatively different here. People seem to have more time for each other. . . . There is a kind of celebration of the individual that is only possible in a small and intimate social enclosure.

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[17]Kathleen D. Lyman, "Interim Evaluation Report, December 1 for District Superintendent," November 29, 1977.

Commenting further on the "style of the place," Walker found it "informal and humorous with a relentless insistence on self-reliance. You can expect support and friendship from the teachers, but you have to expect to be independent."[18]

In an interview for an Amherst newspaper, Richard Clark, Assistant Dean for Program Planning and Development at the School of Education, said this of the collaboration, it is "one of the successes of the University of Massachusetts-English High School" project. Endorsing the learning environment he was "enthusiastic about the Center where . . . there is a sense of human place, a chemical reaction takes place. Absenteeism has dropped off phenomenally." Summarizing the collaboration, Clark termed it "a beautiful, mutually enriching experience."[19]

This record of the written evaluations on the Urban Studies Center comes from a variety of sources. All of them, in their way, have highlighted aspects of the program. Taken together with the informal evaluation process in place at the program, they have become a valuable source for the planning and development of the program.

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[18]Rob Walker, Case Studies in Science Education: Greater Boston, Case Studies in Science Education, Booklet XI (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1977), pp. 11-25, 26, 72.

[19]Gayle Lauradunn, "Locall People Playing Key Role at Boston English," Amherst Record, 14 June 1978, p. 8.

Hard Data

There is not a great deal of evaluative hard data on the record concerning the Urban Studies Center. Most data concerns attendance figures.[20] This is not inconsequential, since attendance figures have long been a strong indication of student interest in the program, and have served to highlight the program's successes through the regular system. The first attendance statistic from the initial Urban Studies Center, "The City," concerns the program's fifty-two freshmen. These students attended school a total of 4,236 days, and were absent a total of 1,199 days for that school year, an attendance ratio of 71.1 percent. This was 18 percent better than the attendance ratio for the other freshmen. This significant difference provided a great impetus towards the program's continuance. The attendance figures for the 1974/1975 school year represented 464 urban and suburban students who participated in some of the program's offerings. They revealed that that year the attendance rate was 79.3 percent, significant even by suburban standards. This statistic marked what the program had begun to expect in the way of its student attendance.

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[20]Urban Studies Center, program files.

In 1976/1977 an attendance study was made of all the students from their date of entry into the program until the date the seniors left for the school year. These figures reveal that of a possible 4,854 days of attendance, students attended the Center 3,829 days, or an attendance ratio of 78.9 percent. This figure marked not only an impressive improvement for the attendance of high school students in the city, but more importantly, an improvement in the students' previous attendance rates in high school. However, no comparison figures were made of student attendance at the Center and their attendance in previous years of their schooling. It was determined that the next year such a study would be undertaken.

In the school year 1977/1978, for the first time a comparison analysis was attempted. Unfortunately, it was not possible for a variety of reasons to compare attendance of all the students to the program. It was possible, however, to deal with all the program's students who were from English High School. During that school year forty-six students from English High School had participated in the program. These students attended the program a total of 3,273 days, and were absent a total of 813 days. The attendance ratio for this year was thus 80.2 percent, the best overall percentage in the program's history. A study was then made of the attendance ratio of these same

students at English High School. The attendance ratio of these students was 52.2 percent. Thus, the Urban Studies Center not only presented favorable attendance ratios as regards to the rest of the system, but the analysis of the previous year's attendance rates demonstrated that students, compared with themselves, positively responded to the Center. Attendance ratios continue to be the program's strongest argument for continuance within the Boston Public School system,

An interesting sidelight to these statistics came in the form of a graph done by a student of the University-English High School collaboration (see figure 11). The attendance of English High School sophomores was graphed every Wednesday from the beginning of the school year until May 10th. Wednesday was chosen for it was believed to be the best attendance day of the school weeek. As the graph dramatically shows, freshmen attendance at the school averaged 60 percent, while the attendance ratio of sophomores was around the 45 percent level. These figures further helped highlight the successful attendance rate of the Center.

The final hard data accumulated are the results of a multi-cultural, multi-racial, educational opinionaire (see figure 12). As part of the new multi-cultural component of the program, it was administered on a random day

FIGURE 11

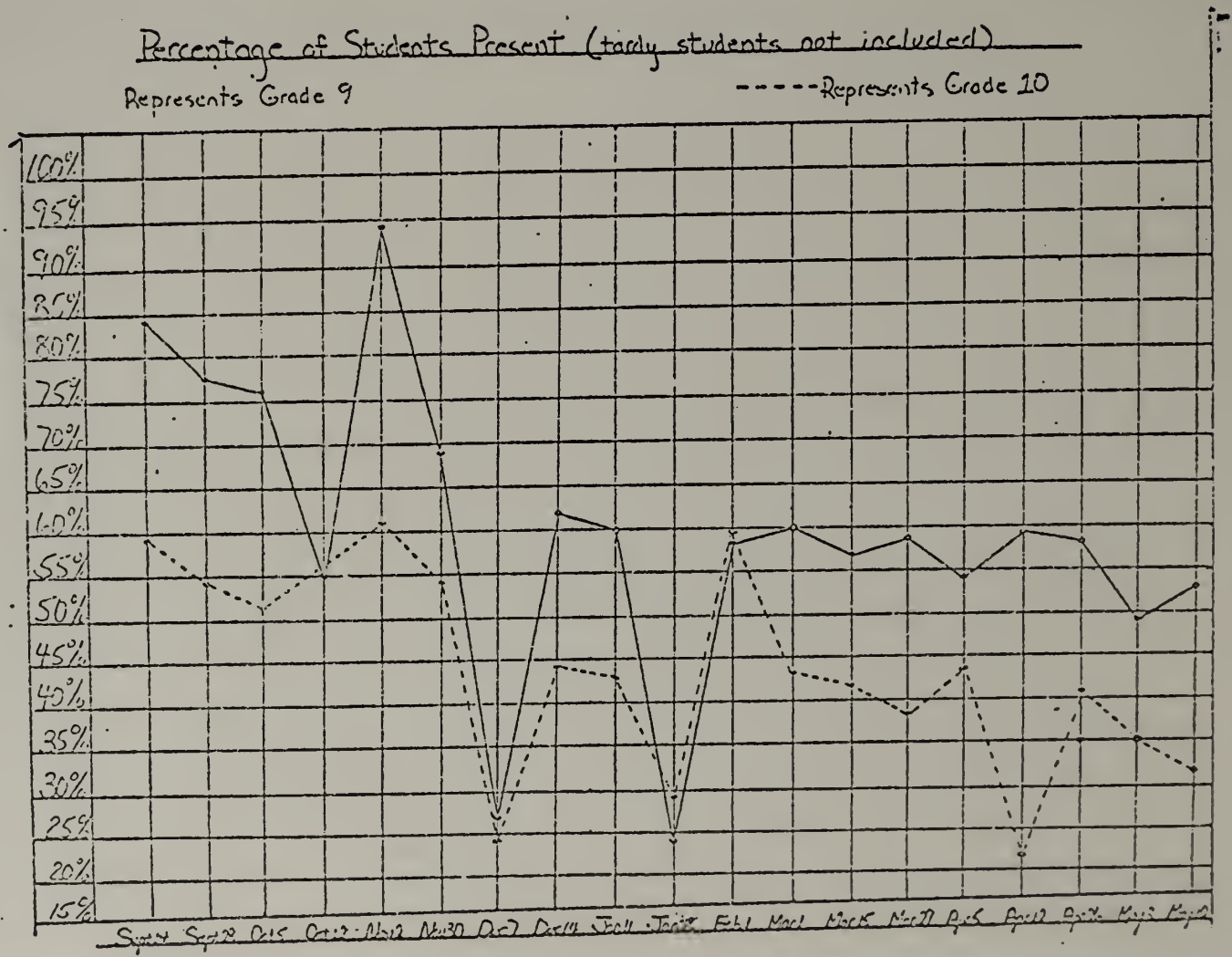
Percentage of Students Present (tardy students not included)
Represents Grade 9
-----Represents Grade 10
100%
95%
90%
85%
80%
75%
70%
65%
60%
55%
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%

FIGURE 12

Evaluation Guidelines for Multicultural/Multiracial Education

STUDENT OPINIONNAIRE

This Student Opinionnaire is packaged separately and may be purchased in quantity from the National Study of School Evaluation.

1. Racial differences are not important to the students in this school.
   15/11 (a) agree 3(c74) 1/0 (b) disagree 2/0 (c) uncertain 1(c74)
2. I have teachers this year from more than one racial/ethnic group.
   15/19 (a) yes 3(c74) 2/1 (b) no 1(c74)
3. The materials and procedures in my classes support the dignity of all races.
   8/16 (a) always 2(c74) 1/0 (c) seldom
   7/3 (b) usually 1(c74) 0/1 (d) never
4. In general, students in this school receive:
   15/20 (a) equal treatment, regardless of race 3
   1/0 (b) unequal treatment, because of race
   2/0 (c) don't know 1
5. This school seems to favor students who are:
   1/0 (a) non-white
   1/0 (b) white
   15/20 (c) no favoritism is shown 4
6. Teachers in this school seem most interested in helping:
   17/20 (a) all students 4 1/0 (c) non-white students
   0/0 (b) no students 0/0 (d) white students
7. I prefer teachers who are:
   0/2 (a) mainly of my own race 5/10 (c) a balanced mixture of races
   0/0 (b) mainly of another race 13/18 (d) don't care about the race of my teachers 4
8. I would prefer to be in a student body:
   0/1 (a) mainly of my own race 14/6 (c) fairly well racially mixed 1
   0/0 (b) mainly of another race 4/10 (d) don't care 2
9. I think I obtain my best education in classes in which the students are:
   0/0 (a) mainly of my own race 10/3 (c) a balanced mixture of races 1
   0/0 (b) mainly of another race 8/17 (d) don't think race is a factor 3
10. There is no racial tension in this school.
    16/16 (a) agree 2 0/0 (b) disagree 1 2/1 (c) uncertain
11. I feel that mingling with students of other races and ethnic groups would:
    10/7 (a) help my learning 3/9 (c) would not affect my learning 1
    1/0 (b) hinder my learning 2 4/4 (d) not certain 1
12. The principal sincerely wants to eliminate racial prejudice in this school.
    16/18 (a) agree 2 1/1 (b) disagree 1 1/1 (c) uncertain
13. I like attending this school:
    13/15 (a) very well 2 2/0 (c) not very well
    3/5 (b) well enough 2 0/0 (d) not at all (1/16)

I am 11/8 male, 7/12 female. My race is Black/Latino/Hisp (13) Portuguese/Black 1
2 males (c74) 1 fem (c74) White Trash Black w/ Indian 1

(This information is needed to help interpret your responses)

NATIONAL STUDY OF SCHOOL EVALUATION
2201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201

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in May 1978. One seminar class was on a field trip at the time and did not participate. As the sample was done randomly, it was not considered appropriate to go back and include this class at a later date. The results of the opinionaire demonstrate that the Urban Studies Center is working towards meeting its goals of having students working and learning together in a pluralistic setting.

No control, home, school, or system-wide questionnaire was given to this grouping. However, as the opinionaire was given under the backdrop of recent racial troubles in Boston it was felt that sufficient contrast did exist.

Interviews

For the purpose of this chapter, a series of interviews were conducted with students of the Urban Studies Center, both past and present. The reason underlying these interviews was to utilize the responses of students in analyzing various program components of the Center. Students were selected randomly. As it turned out, this was a very difficult task as it applied to previous years' students. Their names were picked from a file of all the Center's students; and, if students could not be contacted after two or three attempts, the name following theirs on the list was chosen. Current students were selected in a different manner. On the day when the first interview of

a previous student had begun, only one small seminar session was in class at the Urban Studies Center, the others were out on field experiences. This particular class had had a field trip postponed. Each of the students in this class were interviewed for the project. The only correction to the random nature of the sample came in terms of racial balance of students. Since this has always been an important element in the program, it was felt that it should be reflected in the students who were in the survey. Thus any imbalance in the random sampling was corrected by going to the next appropriate name. This was not a problem for present program students.

The interviews which were conducted were wide ranging, and at times, rambling. In each interview, however, the following elements of the program were discussed: the curriculum, the size, the "informal" nature of the program, the interactions, helpfulness of the program after graduation, and the problems of the program with any suggestions for improvement.

Interview # 1

E____, 22 years old, was a student in the 1976/1977 school year program. She had a quiet, explosive personality, and had "trouble with teachers at English High School."

She did well at the program and the points she earned enabled her to graduate in June, 1977.

At the time of her interview, E_____ was unemployed. She liked the program and called her experience there her "best year in high school." She especially liked "the field trips and outside stuff." She was well liked by the staff and other students, and felt that the program "helped me to get along with people." She had only one criticism of the program but she stated it strongly, "I think the school has too many kids in it. It is a very good school, but it is overcrowded."

Interview #2

P_____, a white female student from Charlestown, was recommended to the program by the 766 coordinator of English High School in the Fall of 1976. She liked the program and did well. She felt that "the program has less hassles, is more developed and put together."

P_____ thought that the size of the program was a benefit since "you don't get lost in the system." This led to other advantages particularly in the learning experience, "the quality of the education is a hell of a lot better because it's more individual." Size was probably a contributing factor to her only criticism of the program, the physical facilities and the lack of some

traditional school supplies, such as notebooks and pencils.

Interview #3

R_____, a black male from English High School, attended the program during the VALUE collaboration in the Fall of 1974. R____'s most positive comments about his experience concern the interpersonal relationships of the program. He stated that "three of us from English High School hung around together and the students from South Boston hung around with each other, but we communicated and got along with each other." This was his first positive experience with South Boston students.

R_____ participated in the program for only one six-week cycle and while he liked it, he felt that "it didn't have any effect" upon his future career choices. When interviewed, R_____ was a junior at Boston College. He felt his experience with the program was a pleasant but not crucial part of his education.

Interview #4

C_____. a white female student from English High School, entered the program in the Fall of 1977. She had negative feelings about English High School calling it "a dump" with many racial incidents, two of which she was involved in. She reported that she felt no anxiety at

Urban Studies, and that "I get along with everybody here."

C_____ felt that the program should "become a school." She was particularly enthusiastic about "the individual help" she received in basic skills and that "I've learned a lot about my career. Her only comment on problems of the program concerned those students "who took advantage of the freedom the program offered." C_____ felt that they should be "thrown out" rather than curtailing the structure and atmosphere of the program.

Interview #5

G_____, a black female from English High School, was an extremely popular student who did very well at the program in 1977. She did well at English High School also. She came to Urban Studies because "I think you learn better, you have a chance of doing something on your own. I thought it was a good opportunity for me. I needed it, I was going to college."

G_____ felt that the small size was a big advantage at the program. She said that "It's like any other high school in this way, if you want to learn something, you are going to learn." Although G_____ would probably succeed in any high school, she felt that the personal nature of the program helped her to mature. Her only problem with the program was the lack of room. She said that she "would have liked to have a reading room, a room you could go to be by yourself and study."

Interview #6

M_____, a white female with a Catholic girl's school educational background, came to the program in the Fall of 1977. She had a negative experience at her previous school, particularly with some of the nuns. She felt that the nuns thought "they have to develop you socially, they try to control your whole train of thought." She felt that she needed the program as a transitional place to study before starting in the public schools as the previous school "had no blacks at all and was all girls."

M_____ liked the small size and the informal atmosphere. She felt, however, that the classes themselves could be more formal. She was sometimes unable to study successfully in the Urban Studies style. "You are going to want to lay back, to do it later, but at that time you don't want to do it." She felt more tests and in class regimen would be better than heavy projects due over a span of time.

Interview #7

C_____ was an exceptionally talented black female from English High School who graduated from the program in 1977. She worked professionally with her mother as a singer at various Boston nightspots during her time at the program. She felt Urban Studies "saved her life." She

reported that "at English I skipped a total of 685 days of school. At the end of ninth grade, I had only gone 3 days." At Urban Studies C_____ attended 75 percent of the time.

In the spring of 1977, C_____ was accepted into Emerson College, a long time ambition. She felt that "she never would have gotten in if I was still at English." She felt this was due to the individualized teaching methods of the program and its size. She felt that more space was necessary for the program but that it should not grow into a larger program. "More kids and more teachers will only make it tense."

Interview #8

E_____, a white male with a background which included several schools, stayed at the Urban Studies Center for three years off and on, longer than any other student. He felt the most important reason he succeeded at the Center was the individual attention he received and the informal nature of the education. He said, "Everyone got along with each other, everyone was relaxed."

E_____ understood that the freedom of the program could be abused but he felt it should not be curtailed.

"People who take advantage of the program, well, it's their problem. I don't think you can really deal with that without hurting the program." E_____'s career goal included going to college and joining the Navy. He felt that the program helped him "develop a sense of responsibility" which furthered his goals.

Interview #9

C_____, a black male from Technical High School, attended the Center from December of 1975 to June of 1977. C_____ was an excellent student who valued the freedom and atmosphere of the program. "The first thing a teacher or a student learns when he attends U.S.C. is that you don't have to be a prisoner to learn."

C_____ was very successful in his interpersonal relationship at the program. He attributed this to the program's size. He felt that he gained maturity in his time at Urban Studies. He "learned how to learn," "wanting to learn something is not only saying what you want to do, but applying yourself to see if you can actually do it." C_____ had no suggestions for change at the Center. "It's fine the way it is."

Interview #10

Y_____, a black female from Jamaica Plain High School, came to Urban Studies in the Fall of 1977. She had experienced some discipline problems at her home high school and reported that she had "turned the place out a couple of times." She had no discipline problems at all during her time at the program. She attributed this to the friendly, informal atmosphere. "I feel that the teachers at Urban Studies are more of a friend to you than a teacher."

She had positive feelings about the program in general, and felt that it "has great advantages that no high school could give." She stated that "In the year I have been at Urban Studies. . . there was never any trouble with one race against the other, or for that matter any trouble at all." She liked being out of the classroom, "I never realized how much I didn't know about Boston until coming to Urban Studies." She had no recommendations for change except that "everybody should have the chance to come to Urban Studies."

Interview Results and Their Relationship to Aspects of the Program

Several problems were found with this interview process. The major problem was the fact that the interviewer was far from an objective participant in the process. In fact, in many cases, the interviewer had formed a personal relationship with the students or had performed some service they had perceived as being valuable. This led to a certain amount of hesitancy on their part to say anything which they felt would be interpreted as a negative response to the program, especially if it was going to be utilized in a formal study. One student interviewed mentioned that she had felt "that the program is like one big happy family." To a certain extent, all the students interviewed shared this perception. Thus, many of the answers given during the interview were, at the very least, careful.

This is not to say that the interviews were without value. Many of the students interviewed felt they would like to help the program by responding accurately and they were able to give good insights into certain elements of the program. Further, the atmosphere of the program, with its history of frank discussion between staff and students, provided a background for students to be candid. Perhaps, du to this background, there was nothing unusual that came up during the process of these interviews, in

terms of the students' expressed perceptions of the program. While it is doubtful, perhaps an objective, neutral interviewer might have elicited more negative responses. It certainly would make for a different type of study if a very large number of students who had participated in the program were interviewed by a neutral observer.

Size

The size of the program seems to be a positive key factor with every student interviewed. The human scale of the Urban Studies Center was compared favorably to the "too big" size of the various home schools of the students. Several students left their home schools specifically because they were "too big, too crowded, too messy," while others came because they "hated school." Only one student interviewed, corroborating a previous study conducted by Wilson, reported coming to the program because of what had been written in the program's descriptive literature.

The major problem of size at the home schools was the impersonality of it all. "You aren't a person, you're a number," was a widely shared feeling. Students at the Center realized the humanistic side of education, while at their home schools, they were just "cogs in an endlessly

spinning wheel." No evidence was found that students at the Center missed their home school, although one very active student often participated in English High School activities while a member of the Center. Size, then, was a major dimension in the students' perceptions of their positive feelings about the Center. Indeed, it might well be said that it is a primary enabling factor in the program's learning and teaching experiences.

Informal Atmosphere

While the size was directly responsible for the human scale, another positive feature of the program was in part responsible for the learning style of the program: informal, concerned and based in reality. All of the students appreciated the program's emphasis on treating them as adults, and felt that their participation in the process of their own education has been a lasting value. Many students agreed with one student who stated that at Urban Studies it was "easier and more fun to learn." Another complained, "my school is too bossy." All students responded that they learned better in the Center's atmosphere. They liked "to be able to learn for myself." Students reported that they enjoyed the Urban Studies Center, a statement that was not widely applied to their previous traditional school experiences.

Interactions

One student reported that "the best part of the program was the way that the students and teachers get along." Another stated that, "You can actually discuss things with them." All students valued the closeness between staff and students, and the adult nature of the interactions. None of the students felt that they could make such positive statements about their interactions at their home schools, at least about the teachers in their teaching and learning experiences. Education is a human experience, with each of the participants in the process having fundamental human worth. It is gratifying that that has come through in the Urban Studies Center experience. It is a tragedy that none of the students interviewed were able to make that statement about their home schools.

Pluralism

Pluralism is a stated goal of the program, and a major part of the efforts of the staff are directed towards its realization. In a city isolated in as many ways as Boston, this is not an easy task. Yet, for the students who were interviewed this process seems to have worked. One student said that, "All the students work together and most enjoy working with each other at this school."

The small sample of the interviews may have hindered a more comprehensive look at the pluralism aspect of the program. Students interviewed in this segment were not representative of the extreme student population the Center took in over the years. Some of these students had been "sent" by home schools trying to get rid of them. All of them chose, for one reason or another, to be at the Center and none of them had a particularly bad history of interpersonal relationships, although six of the students mentioned that they had felt "uncomfortable" in various racial situations in their home schools.

In their experience this was not the case with any student at the Urban Studies Center. One student who had been with the program two years, reported that "there hasn't been a racial incident at this program since I've been here." Another said, "Everyone gets treated equally, then there's no trouble." It was, as one student remarked, "Like one big family." Students interviewed were able to get along with each other and to work and learn from one another. All of them felt that this was an important element in the learning process.

It is important to point out, however, that the Center has not invented the "perfect" school. It has merely developed a structure where the openness of the curriculum allows students to interact in more positive ways. It is

not the intent of the program to have all the students love each other but rather to realize a very important goal--that in this society is going to work with any sense of justice, people must be able to work together.

Curriculum

The students interviewed reported that they were able to work quite well with the responsibility given to them by the program. One student said that "the teachers at the program put a lot of responsibility on your shoulders," while some students experienced difficulty in "the breaking in period." This was felt to be a valuable lesson in learning styles. It helped some students gain "much more self-confidence in myself." And the maturity developed by this process was valued. One student reported that her college experience was "ice cream" because of her experiences in the program. The major curriculum parameter of the program, using the city as a classroom, made the program more "real and interesting." One student remarked that "it made me kind of look forward to going to school." Another stated that "I learned more in one year at Urban Studies than I have at four years of Technical." Every student interviewed said that his attendance at the program was better, and they attributed this to the interest they had in the curriculum and the program as a whole.

Relationship to the Future

An attempt was made in the interview to ascertain if any students perceived that what they had experienced at the Urban Studies Center had been valuable to them, since they had left. Several students indicated that they felt learning to get along with people from different backgrounds had helped them. Virtually every student indicated that learning about the city of Boston had been a big help. As one student put it, "Everywhere I go, Urban Studies Center things come back to me." Two students felt that their college careers had been helped. They felt that they had developed the maturity necessary to handle the college experience from the Urban Studies Center learning and teaching style. One present student stated, "All I can say is, I'm ready for college now." Still, while most students felt that the Center would have future benefits, many were not able to articulate these, other than saying they felt they were better able to get along with people and that they had developed maturity while at the Center.

Problems of the Program

As has been previously mentioned, the nature of this interview was such that the questions attempting to elicit responses about problems at the Center were not answered substantially by many of the students. Many of them felt the program was "Just right" or recommended that "Nothing should be changed." Indeed, one student said if there were

problems, "Let them solve their own problems like we did." Some responses, however, were useful. Several students felt that the Center could become a bit more academic, "more school like," particularly in areas of math and science. One student hoped that Urban Studies might one day be able to offer a wider variety of subjects.

A second area of comment concerned those few students who in each year's program take advantage of the freedom offered them. One student felt that the program "had to get more strict with them." This student did not feel that the overall individuality and freedom of the program should be lessened, just that those specific students should be more controlled. This difficult area is often the subject of the internal evaluations of the program. The Center has tried to create a curriculum for students who are mature and responsible enough to handle it. While the vast majority of the students have responded to this, it is a continuing concern to the staff and the students, that there are those few every yearwho do not benefit from this approach.

A final area of complaint had to do with the physical plant of the Center, both at its old location at Myrtle Street and its present Arlington Street address. Two students argued for a smoking lounge to be set up in one of the classrooms. And while every student complained about

"those damned stairs" at the present site, only one student felt the program should seek newer quarters.

Summary

Perhaps the most noticable result of these interviews is that they coincide with the on-going internal evaluations of the program. These interviews, thus, tend to affirm this process. Several key goals of the program were reinforced by these random interviews. The most significant general statement that can be drawn from these interviews may well be that schools must have a human dimension for learning and teaching. Only then can students learn and work together as mature and responsible individuals. The size and organizational nature of the schools that the students of this survey attended were destructive to the educational process. These interviews seem to indicate that the experience of working together with people from diverse backgrounds was benefical for living and working together in the city.

It must be stated, however, from these interviews, and indeed from the Urban Studies Center experience, that it is hard to draw the line between the failures of traditional schools and the successes of the Urban Studies Center. Some traditional school situations are so dismal that just about anything that the Urban Studies Center does which involves a recognition of the student is viewed as

positive and successful by that student. Perhaps the uniqueness and separate site nature of the program makes it impossible to catagorize.

There is an ultimate commitment to the process that has been started by the Urban Studies Center. That commitment is to make the program a school. It would be foolhardy to speculate, especially in these fiscally restraining times, when that process might reach fruition. It is safe to say it will not be soon. Yet the process is going on, and will continue to do so. The challenge for the Urban Studies Center will be to try and keep its humanity in face of the necessary organizational restructuring that a school requires.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The major statement of this study has been that a separate-site alternative, such as the Urban Studies Center, has certain clear advantages over traditional schools. The collected experiences of the program as presented in the previous chapters will be the basis for making some relevant assumptions about the process of urban education. These assumptions have been illuminated by the Urban Studies Center experience.

It must be emphasized at the beginning that the Urban Studies Center is a small program. Further, despite a relatively long life in terms of alternative programs, it has a fairly minor history compared to the system in which it has existed. However, an important consideration is that the Center does indeed exist and in its own way, has achieved several significant goals. It testifies to the fact that urban education can work. People working together in a pluralistic setting can and do learn. School can be made more humane and more responsive to the needs of their students.

Integration of Cognitive and Affective Curricula

Silberman is only partially correct in his powerful statement: "The banality and triviality of the curriculum in most schools has to be experienced to be believed."[1] The curriculum of today's schools ignores basic human qualities necessary for a just and equitable society. Furthermore, the curriculum is more than dull. It fails to meet the needs of the population it serves. The pernicious evils of social and economic inequality and urban decay are the everyday reality for many Americans. Yet schools are unable to cope with this reality.

It is not possible to expect schools to deal singly with problems of such magnitude that cut across the entire spectrum of American life. Yet, as basic institutions which touch the life of every citizen, they have an urgent role to play. Schools can no longer afford the luxury of being considered separate from the life of the community. Their interdependence needs to be recognized and addressed in the school's curriculum. Learning to live with one another is clearly as important as learning about one another.

The Urban Studies Center has demonstrated that a school can join both the cognitive and affective domains in its curriculum. This can be done only by a purposeful effort which allows for the importance of both of these

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[1]Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom, p. 73.

processes. It is not that difficult to develop strategies wherein students of all backgrounds can work and learn together, share common experiences and backgrounds, learn from their differences and participate in a wholesome academic environment. The Urban Studies Center has found that the common backdrop of the city provides an excellent vehicle for this. Cognitive learning by itself can be seen as too academic to many urban students who are caught up in the complexities of everyday life; yet, the same cognitive development can be made realistic, exciting and practical when joined to the students' real world.

The curriculum strategy of the Urban Studies Center which has proven most effective in allowing for the totality of an educational experience has been the use of the city as a classroom. It must be made clear to the traditional educational establishment that as Gentry stated, "Education recognizes no classroom walls. They are extensions of the community they serve."[2] Using the community in which the students live as a curriculum strategy provides a common denominator for students, irrespective of their backgrounds. Further, it allows students to bring to the school critical skills learned in the city which can be shared with their peers.

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[2]Gentry, The Hope Factor, p. 113.

The survival skills inherent in dealing with the complexity of the city can become a powerful addition to any school curriculum. Tracking becomes moot in a curriculum so vast as the city. Students can participate meaningfully in a curriculum which provides for entry levels most suitable to their individual needs. The Urban Studies Center experience has shown that such a curriculum brings an equality and openness to the learning environment.

All of this argues for change, an alternative to the present traditional system. The Center has found that to incorporate the affective and cognitive domains in a curriculum structure such as the city as a classroom, a site separate from traditional high schools is necessary. Yarger stated the problem:

> Without regard to a defensible rationale, one can take the position that in-class activities one hundred percent of the time are not conducive to intellectual development and the growth of understanding that our schools are being called upon to facilitate.

He confirms the staff's realization that the experience of traditional urban high schools is "frequently a highly artificial world full of reality or even worse, creating a reality that bears little relationship to the world that the students' know exist" and calls upon the schools to "create a series of linkages between the four walls of the school-house and the issues that comprise the twentieth

century." The experience of the Urban Studies Center has shown that this can only be done in a separate site which is closer to the students source of urban experiences.[3]

There are practical reasons as well that argue for a separate facility. The most powerful is the inhospitable atmosphere of most traditional schools. Schurtliff reported on problems that alternatives have experienced in the Cambridge public school system. He recognized the turmoil caused by the unofficial curriculum, the "institutional rule, routines and procedures such as the restriction of student movement in the building," that have crippled so many programs which try to operate within the schools. Even more serious than these organizational constraints have been the problems encountered with traditionally minded teachers, "Likewise, teachers from other school are threatened by what some view as a total breakdown in discipline, right in their midst."[4] The early history of the Urban Studies Center confirmed these problems. It would be difficult to envisage the Center achieving any success and the integration of its curriculum if it were still housed within a traditional school setting.

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[3] Sam Yarger, "Why Alternatives" in Openning the Schools: Alternative Ways of Learning, ed. Richard Saxe (Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing, 1972), pp. 74,79,75.

[4] Ray Shurtliff, "Administrative Problems? Cambridge Pilot School" NASSP Bulletin 57 (September 1973): 76-82.

Another important feature of a separate site program is the neutrality of the educational environment that it presents to students. A separate location can facilitate a fresh start for many students who have experienced trouble adapting to the traditional school. Indeed, it allows for the stigma of the word "school" to be lifted from many of the activities of the program. A separate site program, when it is functioning well, can create a sense of community, a sense of learning and living together in the city, that has a positive influence on the entire curriculum. The separation from a traditional school often brings with it relief from the problems so inherent in the corridors of these urban giants.

It would be absurd to argue that every program in every school should seek a separate site. The institutional problems placed upon separate sites are considerable, particularly with the acquisition of such ancillary services as guidance, and physical education facilities. The primary function of a separate site alternative is that it allows a human scale for the learning environment. This human dimension is vital for the attainment of the program's goals, or indeed, for any educational endeavor. Against the backdrop of school systems dominated by the economies of scale, the human dimensions of small size are worthy of considerable attention.

Size

One of the more dramatic lessons of the Urban Studies Center is the importance that size plays in the students' perception of their educational experience. Almost without exception, students interviewed for the purposes of this study, as well as other student interviews conducted over the history of the program, have resulted in a significant positive feeling about the size and scale of the Center. Students reported that they could not possibly feel they belonged to a school with over 2,000 students. The size of the Center helped them feel that they could shape their own educational destinies. This has been the cornerstone for whatever successes the program has achieved.

Balsam in her report to the New York City Board of Education succinctly presented the problem as

> The urban high school and its parent metro-school system face a fundamental problem: how to avoid the depersonalization which can so easily characterize a large institution, while retaining the advantages of the facilities and the variety of learning experiences made possible by its size.

She reported from her experiences in the New York City schools, the negative aspects of huge size. She found that a significant number of students were "alienated and disaffected with non-achievement and drop out as their hallmark." She related this directly to the inhuman scale of some of the schools. She further reported that many

programs, including separate site programs, have overcome the inadequacies of facility to offer a positive human educational environment. Against a backdrop of so large a school system as the New York public schools, her arguments are particularly telling.[5]

Urban Studies has found many benefits accrued to it from its small size. One of the most important has been the positive interaction among students and staff which is difficult to achieve, at best, in the vastness of traditional schools. Students at the Center know most of their peers. They work with them in projects; they share many of the program's special activities with them.

In addition, it is far easier for students to mature in such a familial setting. Students allowed to take responsibility for their own education become positive participants in the educational process of the school. Accomplishments which would become absolutely lost in the magnitude of many traditional schools are much more noticeable in an urban studies center. Size is indeed so important a factor at the Center that all the other goals and aspirations have come to depend upon it. Without the human scale of Urban Studies, the human process of education would be seriously impaired.

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[5]Bertha Balsam, Humanization and Involvement: The Small Unit Approach (New York: New York City Board of Education, June, 1975), pp. 1-15.

Visual Literacy

The Urban Studies Center has derived many benefits from the emphasis it has placed on the visual aspect of the city as a curriculum component. From the viewpoint of the program, it would not seem possible to deal with the totality of the students' makeup if one did not take into account the visual orientation a student has developed. The Center has attempted to take into account this visual aspect in every element of the program. It would hardly be possible to think of those program elements of the Center such as "the City as a Classroom," the integration of affective and cognitive learning, or even the development of a pluralistic curriculum, without including in the totality of that experience the visual nature of the world. Visual literacy, a forgotten element in the curricula of many traditional schools has been a beneficial, indeed a vital, aspect of the Urban Studies Center.

Visual literacy is a powerful, emerging concept. Purvis quoting the definition given by the 1969 National Conference on Visual Literacy wrote:

> Visual literacy refers to a group of visual competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning.

Purvis confirmed the Urban Studies experience, that visual literacy is crucial to the development of the modern

educated person. Visual literacy, joined with an educational process which has "the goals of increased verbal skills, self-confidence, self-awareness, and environmental awareness will become the processes and the development of a completely literate individual." A powerful curriculum can be fashioned from the urban environment encompassing this totality.[6]

Perhaps the greatest single need for the development of a visually literate individual stems from the enormous influence on students' lives of the media, particularly television. There can be little doubt that schools have failed to confront the reality of television. So great is this development that in many cases, television overwhelms the educational process for students; and, in some cases, even the parental process. For many students, television has, in fact, become the major source of information about the world in which they live. It is the principal socializing agent which shapes their view of the world. Schools can only ignore this factor at the risk of losing contact with the students they hope to teach and in turn influence.

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[6]Purvis, "Visual Literacy," pp. 714-16.

Given such a pervasive influence, it hardly seems possible that public schools have not developed more of a curricula to join the visual world of television and the real world of the students and the schools. Contemporary students are often faced with the bewildering puzzle of how to shape attitudes and beliefs around situations as they appear in the real world versus how they are portrayed on television, versus how a school interprets them all. In many cases, they present three distinct interpretations of what the world is. It would seem to be an obligation of the public schools to deal with this issue.

Another aspect of this problem has been the Urban Studies strategy of attempting to deal with the technology of the media. Through the development of the media program at the Center, where every student must take some "hands on" training with the various media, students are exposed to a wide variety of media from video to photography to newspaper. Students who work with the video, develop their own programs, writing, directing, producing, editing and eventually disseminating the program to other students. This "hands on" experience is not a vocational course in media. It is simply an attempt to decrease the distance between the students' experience with the visual world and its technology. It is an attempt to have students see media as a tool, a tool for learning, for entertainment

and relaxation, a tool that can be used to develop a more creative life.

Yarger pointed out the futility of trying to ignore the preponderance of visual technology in American life and the real need for the schools to deal with it. He lamented that "schools have not faced the fact that this rapidly changing world demands new strategies, a new curriculum, a restructuring of conventional value." He presented a particularly relevant example of the impact of television:

> Consider the impact of the civil rights movement of the 1960's. The fact that white America had been performing atrocities on black Americans has never been a secret. Prior to 1960, most of us were aware of Jim Crow. We knew that dual school systems existed. Separate living and dining accommodations were hardly skeletons in America's closet. Yet, it wasn't until one could watch this treatment on television that people were mobilized to action.[7]

If schools continue to ignore the influence and power of such a medium, that medium must eventually overtake the schools as a place where students learn. In the morass that is urban education today, that process has already begun.

A further Urban Studies experience with the visual aspect of students' learning was the ability to develop a curriculum to encourage the creativity of students.

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[7]Yarger, "Why Alternatives," p. 79.

While all schools give lip service to the fact that students are creative in their dealings with the world, they deny this fact by their organizational rules and constraints. The literature is full of stories relating the outcomes of this pent-up, unused creativity. The Center does not see itself as a creative center. It merely attempts to utilize the innate creative nature of the students as part of its curriculum. It attempts to invite a creative environment so that all students may share the excitement and the energy that discovery and creativity brings. It is yet another way the Center attempts to keep its program in touch with the real world, for clearly, the problems of that world, particularly in the urban areas, demand creative solutions that must be the job of schools to incubate.

Staff

Teacher burnout is a factor in any urban school, but it is particularly a problem in alternative school environments. Dobbins described the problem as it applied to his alternative high school setting, John Adams High School in Portland, Oregon. He reported that "virtually everyone at Adams involved in instruction, is in a state of near exhaustion. There is simply too much work to do with insufficient resources to accomplish it." He further stated that teachers were asked to do far more than is the case

in more traditionally oriented settings. This is not a singular example, but rather the common experience of teachers working in alternative situations. The simple fact is that the process of education, done correctly, with the energy necessary to accommodate the individual human qualities of all of the students, is a very difficult one regardless of where it is taking place. Dobbins pointed out that:

> managing substantial numbers of students who requently find themselves outside the walls of the schools, let alone out the classroom, takes a great deal of energy, attention to detail, and administrative follow through.

As necessary as this management is in providing a relevant, useful educational setting for students, it can be very hard on teachers, particularly teachers poorly trained in the traditional methodologies of education. For many it is not a question of whether they can adapt, "the question is whether they can survive the pressure."[8]

The Urban Studies Center has developed no magic formula for combatting teacher burnout. It has, however, survived for seven years, with one of its original staff members and a present staff still totally committed to the goals and activities of the program. A contributing reason is that the staff feels they are a part of the program in which they work. Decisions at the Center are shared, and no

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[8]Allen L. Dobbins, "Instruction at Adams," Phi Delta Kappan, 52 (May, 1971): 516-19.

major decision has ever been made without a fully cognizant staff sharing process. Students are also full participants in the decision making process. Glatthorn reported the seemingly self-evident fact that students and staff "are more likely to support and implement those decisions in which they have had a voice."[9] The energy necessary to run a program such as the Center is often tremendous. It cannot be garnered by administrative fiat. It must be willingly provided by the endorsement of the participants. Traditional schools, particularly urban schools, could well benefit from the sharing of the decision making process among the total school community. The energy thus released could power a far more meaningful experience than is now thought possible.

Another problem, particularly applicable to alternative schools that is alleviated at least in some measure by this decision making process is that of charismatic leadership. Alternative schools have often been powered by an administrative energy source often derived from the person who has founded the program. This is not unusual. As Glatthorn stated "In almost every successful alternative school, there is some designated person called Director

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[9]Allen Glatthorn, "Decision Making in Alternative Schools," NASSP Bulletin 57 (September, 1973): 110-19.

or Head Teacher." There must be a person to handle the "administrivia," the details and the daily operations of any program. The tragedy of such leadership in the alternative movement is that the charismatic leader so controls the decision making process that the program itself often fails. Education is not the province of a single entity. It is a shared learning experience. Charismatic leaders, often because they have founded the program, lose perspective of their staff and students in their enthusiasm and energy for keeping the program going. The tragic history of short-lived programs in the alternative movement is testimony to this all-too-common problem.

The only antidote that the Urban Studies Center has been able to develop to alleviate this problem is to clearly delineate the program's goals, directions and activities in as formal a manner as possible. At the Center, a booklet has been produced describing the program's goals, curriculum, activities and hopes for its future. (See appendix.) This booklet was developed with the total cooperation of the staff and students. It has become almost the Center's constitution to which even its director is responsible. While this may be too formalistic in actual fact, the process works well. The administrator of the Center has no more say in a major decision than any other participant in the program. There can be no doubt,

however, that there is an ad hominem relationship to the longevity of the program, an unavoidable human consequence of authorship. It can be dealt with. The program is alive and well today not because of what any charismatic leader has done, but because a group of staff and students have worked hard to keep it as a viable educational option.

The Urban Studies Center, over the last several years, particularly in its collaboration with the University of Massachusetts, has accomplished work in teacher training with student teachers. The program has developed several strategies which have apparently been beneficial to many of these young intern-teachers. The major point of this strategy has been to allow these student teachers to become full and meaningful participants in the Urban Studies Center, with as many rights and privileges as they are willing to assume. Student interns at the Center, as they would in any school setting, are required to perform certain supervised teaching tasks as part of their development in the profession. However, at the Center, this has been augmented by the student-teachers developing their own curriculum in the seminar session of the day. This fulfills the need of both the Center and the student-teachers. These young interns are encouraged to teach their own seminar, using the city as a base, in whatever subject they

feel most comfortable, regardless of how remotely it may be related to their credential requirements.

State, school, and city certification requirements are carefully adhered to by the administration and staff relative to teacher performance in both the morning and afternoon segments of the program. In the seminar segment the interns' requirements for a meaningful educational experience which they have helped to create out of the city in which they are teaching, is also met. The energy and success that these seminars have produced over the years is excellent proof of their success at developing teachers skilled not only at doing what they are told in the traditional way of education, but in developing a curriculum that meets both their teaching style and the students' needs as they have come to know them.

Change Within the System

The Urban Studies Center is part of the Boston Public School System, yet, it is also a reaction to it. The Center has always tried to impose a human element on the curriculum and activities of the huge organizational structures inherent in the traditional school system. Its very existence speaks for change. In the early history of the program, it struggled merely to stay alive from year to year within a system that tolerated it without any support. In recent years, the program has matured and

reached a minimal level of acceptance by that system.

Tyack argues against the present trend for uniform sameness in the schools. He makes the point that to guarantee the constitutional and social rights to each individual in this society, a pluralistic approach to education is needed. "The same 'reality' may appear quite different to diverse groups and individuals. That fact alone destroys the possibility of a single objective account of the meaning of events." There cannot be one way of learning to suit all students. Individuals are not equal in the society, either in their innate abilities or in the way that this society treats them as individuals. There are pervasive injustices in the society which the schools not merely reflect but reinforce.

Tyack further observed that the school's response to a pervasive racism was "not to try to use the school to explore and correct the racism of American society, but rather to 'adjust' the black child to the white middle class norms education accepted unquestionably." Assimilation took the place of understanding. It is not a new theme for American education, for as Tyack pointed out, "The major argument that would dominate discussion of the desegregation of the public schools for the next century were already present in Boston in the 1840's." The recent struggles which have produced such violence and

such negative national attention for the Boston Public Schools have a history as ancient as the school system itself.

The recent changes that have come to the school system have primarily come from the outside. A federal court was forced to implement policies which the Boston Public Schools could not or would not implement for themselves, policies so obviously necessary for the creation of a school system responsible to its citizens that they will shame the City's conscience for decades to come. As a result of federal intervention schools are beginning to allow all students to participate in the activities of the school. Indeed, Tyack concluded that "I believe the conjecture that historians one hundred yeas hence may consider the ferment of the 1960's and the 1970's to be a major turning point in the history of American education."[10]

Now that external change has fostered reform in the Boston Public Schools, the issue of change from within must still be addressed. The Urban Studies Center, even in its existence before the federal court order, was

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[10]David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 4, 220, 112, 248.

committed to a change in the curriculum of the Boston Public Schools. Sarason agreed that change from within is of extreme importance. Mechanisms which a school implements among all the elements of that system, are far more important to the vitality and health of the public schools than the hope of future external interventions. Yet, as Sarason pointed out, "it is one thing to see the need for change and to desire it, and it is another to accomplish that change." He found "nothing unusual in the fact that many of those who comprise the school culture do not see change or react enthusiastically to it." For such a traditionally immutable institution as a public school, change is "an extremely difficult theoretical problem" as well as a realistic one. Yet, it is essential for urban schools to realize that "the important point is that we can never understand the significance of existing regularities apart from the response to the alternative."

Sarason recommends change in small doses, with gradual involvement of "more and more groups with the process." The Urban Studies Center would be an example of such a change, gradually developing over the years. He is also quick to warn of the dangers and difficulties of change in the public sector and warns how dangerous it is to "play it by ear." Change must be carefully conceived and

thoughtfully carried out with a demonstrated validity for the system which it seeks to alter. He argues against the charismatic nature of change. Change, Sarason further states is a cognitive act. He found that

> we do not act but react. Not with the aim of changing our concepts or heaven forbid, our theories, from which our conceptions presumably derive, but to change that which is most easy to change: the engineer aspects.

The changes necessary in education, particularly urban education, are fundamental. Superficial changes would be yet another cruel deception on a community long victimized by its schools.

The Urban Studies Center has met the criteria for change that Sarason advocated, even though, as he pointed out, school systems "do not have the soil in which the seeds of new ideas can grow and thrive." Small changes, documented in the literature on a carefully developed basis, can impact the school system. Its size itself is no criteria for "to look at smallness as inevitably as having virtuous consequences is to downgrade the role of ideas and conceptions." Quality is the key as well as the meaningful participation of all of the elements of the educational community.[11]

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[11] Sarason, The Culture of the School, pp, 9, 88, 109, 131, 210, 219.

Summary

The Urban Studies Center has changed the public school system by its very existence. It is a small program, and the resultant change has obviously been small. Yet, by its existence it has proven that an open curriculum, a curriculum derived from the interests and needs of the students is not only feasible, but it can be successful; it can be successful within the public schools. Students and teachers can work together in new ways to provide an education that is equally as valid as that of the traditional school, even using traditional school evaluators, such as attendance ratios and college admissions. Yet that is not the point. It is, that it can happen. It did happen. The purpose of this study has been to add to the literature. It is greatly to be hoped that this will be a small addition to what will be a growing canon of urban educational success.

But what of the future? National trends are moving away from alternative open education. Student options are no longer the by-word of educational conferences. Newer, more shrill voices speak the system's language of accountability and control. The hectic pace of the last decade has all but dissolved the inroads made by the alternative school movement. Critics such as James Cass report that

the "failureof the high hopes of the past decade, in short, raises a serious question of whether true alternatives to traditional education are possible at all."[12] Newspaper articles in the Boston Globe report that school system after school system is working at "placing students under tighter rein."[13] School systems are moving away from and modifying open campus programs.

Longcupe sanguinely reported the decline of many alternative programs, particularly private alternatives. While public funding was listed as a key reason for this decline, the lack of support from students and parents was also a major factor. Alternative education, the movc towards opening the curriculum towards students' needs and desires are a thing of the past, according to the current media interpretation.[14]

Alternative programs are clearly in difficulty, yet, the Urban Studies Center is clear evidence that they do exist and can continue to thrive in the urban educational environment. Indeed, the future of the Center has never

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[12]James Cass, "Are There Really Any Alternatives?" Phi Delta Kappan (March, 1973), pp. 452, 453.

[13]John O'Keefe, "We Are Getting More Structured Every Year," Boston Globe, 8 March 1978, p. 1.

[14]Kay Longcupe, "Remember Those 'Alternative Schools'? Many Have Closed," Boston Globe, 29 May 1978, p. 14.

looked better. Early in the 1977 school year, the Center suffered a major setback when its budget was lost, due to a new computerized accounting system ordered by the School Committee. An appeal was made to regain the program's displaced budget. That appeal was upheld and the results have changed the nature of the Center. For the first time in its history, it has an equal budgetary status with every traditional high school in the city. Further, it has its own staff, only four, but this is also a first. In addition, the program has received a separate budgetary status from English High School. In fact, some interpretors call it an independent status. In any case, the Center has been guaranteed for an eighth year and very likely more. Thus, the Urban Studies Center's future, while difficult, is assured.

This study makes no great claim that change within the system is an easy undertaking. A curriculum can be developed using diversity as strength and the maturity of students as the energy for making it a success. A simple statement of the Center is that urban schools can work. It is a small program and thus a small statement. Yet, unless that statement is repeated over and over again, the future of American society as evidenced by its schools is in great jeopardy.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Chapter I

The description and analysis of the Urban Studies Center is based on the personal and official files which I have maintained since the program's inception. These files contain hundreds of items including: student materials; proposals; evaluations, both external and internal (by staff, students and parents); records; and documents.

In preparation for this study, I found several books useful. Two by Mario Fantini were important: Public Schools of Choice (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973) which explains the ideas that public schools could allow children and parents to choose the kind of education they want, and Alternative Education: A Source Book for Parents, Teachers, Students and Administrators (New York: Anchor Books, 1976) edited by Fantini, which is an invaluable collection of material on the theoretical and practical issues of alternative education. Byrd Jones coordinating editor for Urban Education: The Hope Factor (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1972) offers strategies for hope in urban school systems despite the general failure of these schools. Atron Gentry's article, "The Hope Factor for Urban Education," was particularly useful. Charles Silberman's Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970)

criticized education today and suggested ways for open classrooms in schools.

I studied several authors in preparation for the case study method used in this research. The most useful were: Carter V. Woods and Donald E. Scates, Methods of Research (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954), J. William Asher, Educational Research and Evaluation Methods (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976) and David J. Fox, The Research Process in Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

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and Winston, 1971); Donald Cox, The City as Schoolhouse: The Story of the Parkway Program (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1972); Peter Buckman, editor, Education Without Schools (London: Scribenier Press LTD., 1973); Donald Moore, Thomas Wilson, and Richard Johnson, Metro School: Chicago's School Without Walls (Chicago: Urban Research Corporation, 1971).

Various other documents were necessary for study of English High School and among them were: reports, notably Joseph M. Cronin, Organizing an Urban School System for Diversity (Cambridge: McBer and Company, 1970); court guides, especially Judge J. Arthur Garrity's desegregation order Morgan v. Hennigan, 379F. Supp. 410 (D. Mass 1974); and school reports and proposals such as the proposal I wrote with James Buckley, "A Proposal for a Program Called 'The City' for the Academic Year 1971-1972."

Chapter II

I have relied on my personal and official files as coordinator of the Urban Studies Center in developing this chapter on the development of the program. Material prepared by staff members of the program was especially useful. Material relevant to the development of the program over the years is vast. Particularly useful for this chapter, however, was: Institute of Contemporary Art

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Chapter III

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Chapter IV

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Chapter V

Two works were most useful to my thinking about the conclusion of this study. David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge:

Harvard University Press, 1974) is a comprehensive view of urban education and the centralization of the schools. Seymour B. Sarason, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971) has written an excellent book on how change comes to schools.

Other books and articles useful for the conclusions presented here were: Sam Yarger, "Why Alternatives?" in Opening the Schools: Alternative Ways of Learning, ed. Richard Saxe (Berkeley: McCutcheon Publishing Co., 1972); Ray Shirtliff, "Administrative Problems," Cambridge Pilot School," NASSP Bulletin 57 (September 1973); Bertha Balsam, Humanization and Involvement: The Small Unit Approach (New York: New York City Board of Education, June 1975); Allen L. Dobbins,"Instruction at Adams, Phi Delta Kappan (May 1971); Allen Glatthorn,"Decision Making in Alternative Schools," NASSP Bulletin 57 (September 1973).

Appendix A


THE
IS
SCHOOL
CITY
THE
URBAN STUDIES CENTER

THE URBAN STUDIES CENTER

Urban Studies is an innovative, alternative approach to education operated by The English High School. At the Urban Studies city-wide resource center, located in the political and historical heart of the city, students will study basic skills, will explore their own career potential and will utilize the resources of the urban environment. Frequent firsthand contact with the people and the places of the city and wide use of audio and visual media to communicate the special meaning of the city make this program unique, timely and important for young people who are committed to the goals of the program.

Students are enrolled through the Flexible Campus Program at their respective schools.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING

   To develop within students the abilities to take an active role in shaping their own education.

2. BASIC SKILLS

   To continue basic skill mastery on an individual basis so that students will at least maintain the level and rate of achievement gained in previous years.

3. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND TEAM BUILDING

   To increase positive interaction between students of different sexes and ethnic, geographic, economic backgrounds.

4. URBAN SKILLS

   To perceive and utilize the urban experience as a contributing factor to individual growth and educational development.

5. CAREER EXPLORATION AND COUNSELING

   To enable students, based on their experiences in the community and in the classroom, in making career choices realistic and consistent with their abilities and interests.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will abide by the Code of Discipline of the home schools and the Flexible Campus Guidelines.

Because of the unique aspects of the Urban Studies Center, the members must be particularly aware of the following areas of concern:

1. We must make every effort to have a good relationship with our neighbors in the community.
2. Smoking, use of drugs or alcohol or possession of weapons will not be tolerated.
3. Physical and/or verbal abuse of other students and of teachers will not be tolerated.
4. High absenteism/tardiness will not be tolerated.
5. Students will not go to their home schools without written permission from the Urban Studies Center coordinator.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AT URBAN STUDIES:

1. Student use of office phone will be permitted only under teacher supervision and in cases of emergency.
2. Students will not congregate in or disrupt business in the office during school hours.
3. Clean-up is the responsibility of everyone and each student will be assigned maintainance tasks.
4. Informal social activities (food, music) will be allowed in a special area designated for that purpose.

HOW STUDENTS WILL ATTAIN THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING
   - a) Students will arrange field trips and interviews
   - b) Students will teach and tutor
   - c) Students will act as tour guides and group leaders
   - d) Students will do independent projects and study
   - e) Students and faculty will provide urban studies resources to the home schools
   - f) Students and parents will make input into planning, operating and evaluating programs

2. BASIC SKILLS
   - a) Students will write every day
   - b) Students will read every day
   - c) Students will work regularly each week in consumer math and basic arithmetic
   - d) Students, in seminars and other classes, will work in the areas of political science, science, health and physical education
   - e) Students will become familiar with and competent with visual arts and other media forms of communication
     - (1) Students will successfully operate or adjust the following equipment used in class productions related to the communications theme.
       - VTR Camera
       - VTR Tape Deck
       - VTR Monitor
       - Camera Tripod
       - Audio Systems
     - (2) The students involved in the U.S.C. will prepare production scripts, video tape recording orders and will function as talent for the productions, camera men and production co-ordinators.
     - (3) By the end of each cycle students will produce a finished video tape production.
     - (4) Students will be thoroughly familiar with all facets of a newspaper from writing, layout and production to distribution.
     - (5) Students will act as reporters, editors and layout men and will develop a thorough knowledge of urban issues.
     - (6) Students will produce and distribute a newspaper.

3. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND TEAM BUILDING

a) Students, male and female, from diverse ethnic and geographical backgrounds will work successfully together
   (1) by an enrollment reflective as nearly as possible of the ethnic, geographic and sex ratios of the city,
   (2) by becoming aware of and eliminating sex and ethnic stereotyping,
   (3) by working together all day in small groups in a variety of situations.

b) Students will learn to communicate effectively with their peers and to respond supportively to the realities of ethnicity and group sharing.

c) Students will become skillful in group problem solving and decision making and government procedures.

d) Students will participate in social activities such as an ethni-city luncheon, a boat trip, and a picnic; and in field trips, sports activities and town meetings

e) Students will participate in planning and producing of murals, slide tapes, t.v. productions, newspaper, and plays.

f) Students will learn to make creative use of their leisure time.

4. URBAN SKILLS

a) Students will learn to interact competently with the adult community.

b) Students will gain knowledge of the city and will share that knowledge within the Urban Studies Center and with the home school through a variety of visual/media techniques.

c) Students will learn the relevance and the relatedness of issues through a curriculum that integrates content by weekly themes and through close, family contact with diverse faculty talents.

d) Students will have quick and easy access to first hand learning experiences by having a separate site location in the business, political and cultural heart of the city.

e) Students will participate in field trips to city, state and federal agencies and in interviews with employees of those agencies.

f) Students will visit and use parks, recreation facilities, and museums.

g) Students will become familiar with public transportation and connected agencies.

h) Students will take walking tours of various neighborhoods.

5. CAREER EXPLORATIONS AND COUNSELING

a) Students will observe and experience a variety of careers firsthand.

b) Students will hear and interview speakers from ABCD, Department of Employment and Security, Police, Fire, Public Utilities, City Hall, BRA, School Department and other employers and employees in the business world.

c) Students will research career fields at the Library.

d) Students will interview at colleges and other education training institutuions.

e) Students will have interviews and placements in the business community

f) Students will receive daily counseling through formal and informal individual discussions about career aspirations, basic skill deficiencies and personal problems.

g) Students will study and produce in various fields of employment through independent project work.

h) Students will develop greater self-esteem and trust through open and close interaction among other students and faculty.

THE STUDENTS

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for this program students must

1. be juniors or seniors
2. conform with an overall program enrollment balanced by sex, ethnicity and total numbers.
3. enroll for no less than one-quarter year and no more than two full terms
4. volunteer for, understand, and be committed to the program

The Urban Studies program is not equipped to take students who have severe emotional or academic problems.

ACCEPTANCE:

1. All candidates will be interviewed by members of the Urban Studies Center
2. All students will make up the Urban Studies Center student contract.
3. Prior records of candidates are transferred to the Urban Studies Center
4. Students may enter the program only at designated entry dates.

DISMISSAL:

A student may be dismissed from the program for the following reasons;

1. Notification of the school by the student's parents or guardians that they desire to have the student returned to his or her home school.
2. Recommendation of dismissal for specified reason by the student's teacher and the Urban Studies program coordinator.
3. Failure to abide by the Urban Studies student contract.
4. Serious breeches of the school discipline code.
5. Violation of the Flexible Campus Rules.

APPEAL:

A student may appeal for continuation in the program only prior to a dismissal action.

1. Every student will receive an orientation stating the expectations of the program and its faculty and students and the responsibilities of individual members.
2. Emergent problems will be discussed regularly in individual counseling sessions.
3. A trial period of between three and five days will allow the student and program to consider withdrawal or dismissal without penalty.

4. Consideration of dismissal will be spelled out in at least one conference with teachers, the student and his parents or guardians, with sufficient subsequent time allowed to correct the problem or problems. A report of this conference will be forwarded to the student under consideration, his or her parents, the Headmaster and Flexible Campus Coordinator of the home school.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will abide by the Code of Discipline of the home schools and the Flexible Campus Guidelines.

Because of the unique aspects of the Urban Studies Center, the members must be particularly aware of the following areas of concern:

1. We must make every effort to have a good relationship with our neighbors in the community.
2. Smoking, use of drugs or alcohol or possession of weapons will not be tolerated.
3. Physical and/or verbal abuse of other students and of teachers will not be tolerated.
4. High absenteism/tardiness will not be tolerated.
5. Students will not go to their home schools without written permission from the Urban Studies Center coordinator.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES AT URBAN STUDIES:

1. Student use of office phone will be permitted only under teacher supervision and in cases of emergency.
2. Students will not congregate in or disrupt business in the office during school hours.
3. Clean-up is the responsibility of everyone and each student will be assigned maintainance tasks.
4. Informal social activities (food, music) will be allowed in a special area designated for that purpose.

MEDIA I Print Media & Audio Tape

Students will explore in depth various aspects of the print media as it applies to their lives. As part of this exploration, students will learn the use of audio tapes in its various aspects especially for the purpose of interviewing.

OBJECTIVES

A) Students will study various kinds of print media

1) newspapers
2) pamphlets
3) forms/contracts
4) fiction/non-fiction
5) official reports
6) surveys

B) Students will develop an understanding of newspapers
1) purpose.
2) production
3) place in modern communications set up

C) Students will produce a newspaper

1) learn roles of newspaper
2) function in some of these roles
3) work on the actual production and dissemination of an USC newspaper

D) Use an audio tape as a tool for newspaper production

1) understand uses of tape recorder
2) learn interview techniques
3) participate in audio tape projects
4) learn some background in radio

ACTIVITIES

A) Read newspapers, reports, stories etc.

B) Tour various newspapers

1) Boston Globe
2) Christian Science Monitor
3) Jamaica Plain Citizen

C) Tour various Boston Publishing houses

D) Use tape recorder on projects

E) Set up, produce, and disseminate a newsletter

F) Become part of a communication system with home schools

G) Tour state and federal publication stores.

Media #3 Semester I

Photography

Goal: The students will learn "to see" the city through the eye of the camera.

Objectives: The students will receive instruction on the following
1) use of Polaroid, Instamatic and 35mm cameras
2) mixing chemicals and maintaining equipment and darkroom
3) display and mounting of photographs and slides.

Activities: The students will participate in the following
1) setting up darkroom
2) taking photos on field trips and during other U.S.C. activities
3) teaching each other; working in teams on photo assignments

Visual Products: 1) slides
2) photo picture essay (related to U.S.C. activities)

Video - Overview also Super 8 MM Motion Picture

OBJECTIVES

1) All students will become familiar with the set up, operation and maintenance of the video rover camera, tape deck and monitor.

2) All students will learn to put their written and oral skills into a video package by scripting.

3) Students will become familiar with basic television operation by acting as camera man, director, and on camera with these scripts

4) Students will become familiar with basic lighting techniques.

5) Students will become familiar with editing techniques.

6) Students will learn interviewing techniques and then utilize them both at inhouse and outside.

7) Students will be required to do a number of video packages besides interviewing -(i.e. commercial, news, and or small play.)

SEMINAR - ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Overview

It is the intention of the Environmental Seminar to examine the metropolitan area in its current dimension. Students will study land use decisions, air, water, and soil pollution and what is being done currently, and some model legislation that may effect us in the future.

Approach

approx. 3 x/wk for 5 or 6 wks.

It is important for students to become aware of the economic ecological, and political issues of land use practices. It is also important that they become aware of how their environment and their lives may be affected, by legislation, and how it is affected. It is essential they develop skills and knowledge to:

1) understand the relationships between the natural and man-made environment

2) be able to investigate the way various interest groups compete for the land

3) see how the government operates to regulate land use

4) understand the domino-effect of land use decisions in both natural and social environments

5) know that citizens, through the political process, can influence land use decisions and legislation

6) understand the method and ways of contacting pressure groups and legislatures that effect land use decisions

7) learn how to get around the city

8) become more aware of, the environment they experience and compare it with other environments

9) understand the various methods used in testing the environment and various techniques to safe guard it

10) become aware of the effects a polluted environment has on the student and the rest of his biosphere.

Student Experiences

Students can expect to engage in a variety of experiences both in the somewhat traditional classroom setting and out in greater metropolitan Boston.

- 2 -

In the Classroom

1) making maps
2) reading
3) planning field work
4) putting together photo, film and video presentation
5) analyzing
6) making models
7) watching films
8) labratory activities (ie. water, soil analyzing)
9) guest speakers
10) discussing issues and experiences
11) land use inventory
12) interviewing land users and policy makers
13) photographing places

Proposed Mini Trips

1) Waters edge walk 1700's 1800's
2) Water front walk
3) Creative snooping
4) M.D.C. and City water treatment labs and offices
5) Boston archetecture
6) Custom House Tower
7) Local Dump
8) Charles River walk
9) Edison Smoke Stacks

Proposed Full Day Trips

1) Boat trip around Harbor and to George's Island
2) Wetlands and the Developer
3) Strip development Rte. 1
4) Blue Hills geology, land forms, basin overview
5) Marches and land fill - Neponset, W.Rox. H.School - Tenean Beach, Dorchester
6) Moose Hill Sanctuary, Sharon
7) Urban restoration sites, Newburyport
8) New England Aquarium
9) Science, Museum of

Special Program

Charles River Project - One day per week for eight weeks.

The Urban Studies Course will be a wide ranging examination of current issues in the City. These issues will be taken from all aspects of urban living such as the cultural, political, or educational sectors. It is the purpose of this seminar to give students a relevant background into those facets of modern urban life which greatly affect their way of life.

Major Themes

A) The City - Old and New

B) The future of The City

C) The functions and workings of government

1) Federal
2) State
3) City

D) Issues of The City

1) Transportation
2) Crime
3) Presidential election
4) Equal Rights Amendment
5) Political parties
6) Geographic studies
7) Neighborhood studies
8) Boston 200 - Boston 300
9) Education
10) "The Athens of America"

ACTIVITIES

1) Many visits and tours.
   A) State House B) City Hall
   C) Freedon Trail D) Financial District,etc.

2) Maps, plans, drawings
3) Interviews in The City
4) Survey
5) Read and analyse reports
6) Attend public meeting
7) Meet & talk with elected officials

PRODUCTS

Each student will be responsible for a major product as a result of participating in this course.

This product may take the form of

1) Term paper
2) Report
3) Analysis of a major issue
4) Neighborhood study
5) A survey report

Art Seminar Semester I

Goal: To explore the visual implications of U.S.C. themes, and at the same time emphasize visual awareness at the individual level and team skills at the group level. This will increase the students' 1) ability to see that viable learning /communicating occurs visually as well as verbally and, 2) positive concept of self as she/he relates to the large, diverse student group.

Objectives: The semester will be divided so that I will meet with each group for a total of six weeks . The material covered during those weeks will be:

Weeks I and II -- BASIC ART SKILLS AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Basic art instruction in color, texture, line, form, etc.

Week III -- CREATING GROUP IDENTITY WHILE DISCUSSING VISUAL PHENOMENON IN CULTURAL GROUPS AND SUBCULTURAL (ETHNIC) GROUPS

Discussion of "culture" and symbolism as it relates to art. Activities will be structured in such a way so that students will interact, exchanging views and asking and answering questions which promote group identity.

Week IV -- PUBLIC ART AND CULTURAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

The students will study the public art (murals, sculpture, planned parks) in various neighborhoods as it relates to their cultural/ethnic identity.

Week V and VI --- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP TO COMPLETE VISUAL TASK

The students will plan and execute, in their group, a mural using an urban theme.

Media #3 Semester I

City Planning

Goal: Students will study the urban environment and will explore the need for public concern and opportunities for programatic and physical (visual) solutions to urban problems. The city will be analyzed in three areas: 1) habitat
2) recreation
3) movement systems (transportation)

Objectives: The students will receive instruction in the following areas:

1) model building
2) What makes a neighborhood: needs assesment in the areas of habitat. recreation and movement.
3) understanding and making maps

Activities: 1) visit to BRA in City Hall and to a Site Office concerned with one neighborhood
2) visit to local architects and design schools (Harvard and MIT, and The Boston Architectural Center)
3) group project to improve hypothetical public space (playground, park) in a neighborhood.
4) study Olmstead's "Emerald Necklace" with site visits
5) draw movement map of neighborhood
6) build group and/or individual models
(e.g.) a) historical space (acropolis)
b) favorite space (bedroom)
c) hypothetical space (townhouse in city)

Visual Products: 1) maps
2) models

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Approach

The physical education program is designed to keep the concept of exercise as an important component of total health. The following goals will allow for a program with limited facilities but maximum results.

1) to develop an increased level of coordination, agility, and balance

2) to increase team building concepts

3) to decrease racial and sexual stereotypes concerning sports

4) to develop a sense of well-being derived from good physical conditioning

Activities

1) Olympic day - full day program

2) A weekly planned phys. ed. activity

OVERVIEW INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS

On Friday afternoon, a release time period will allow the student to work on independent study projects. These projects will begin with a comprehensive course in library use. The Copley Square Public Library will be used as the learning site. Understanding of the card catalogue, periodic literature guide, resource dept., tapes, and recors departments.

Next the students will do a Career Exploration project. They will be asked to do library research on their chosen careers. They will then be asked to interview students and workers in this area on site.

Once the student has the feeling that he/she can learn about almost everything on his own, he/she is assigned a number of other projects per semester. These projects may be about their neighborhood, their city, their family. The student has the option to utilize the time to do these projects as he/she wishes, as long as the project measures up to his/her ability. The student must sign an independent study contract, which denotes the exact nature and intent of the project. The contracts, assignments and grading will be done through the homeroom section.

OVERVIEW

ALTERNATIVE EXPERIENCES (Non-Classroom Activities)

Mini-Trips

Since the USC will be located centrally, many places will be close enough to walk to and back to the program easily. Sites such as City-Hall, State House and the Aquarium. This is one of the strongest points of our program. This also allows for interviewing all types of people who make the city go.

Full Day Trips

The nature of our scheduling allows for one day a week to take a major portion of that day to be used to visit a site that is either a good distance from the program or one that needs a greater slot of time for the visit. Examples of these would be Logan Airport, Aquarium, Boat trip around harbor.

Observerships

In combination with our career orientation program, certain students who opt for it, will be placed in situations that will allow them to work at a variety of tasks with a variety of people in order that they may gain a better "feel" for this type of work. Certain guidelines such as time slots, evaluation, and interference with ongoing USC program will be considered.

CAREER RESOURCE CENTER SEMESTER I

The career resource room will be setup for the use of students and teachers to aid them in career exploration projects and direction. The following basic material will be provided.

Brochures and Monographs of various careers

U.S. Government Occupational Handbook

Encyclopedia of Careers (2 sets)

Job interview techniques

General interviewing techniques

Civil Service job descriptions

File of articles concerning careers

File of careers in Boston Area

Listing and file of popular college catalogues

Part-time and possible full-time job bank

Listing and file of possible scholarships available

Information from Mass. Employment Security

Information from A.B.C.D.

Small library of books concerned with careers, career testing, changing careers, unemployed, with large bibliography